ANDREW **MARSHALL** | DRUM **LESSONS** | STEVE **SMITH** | PLAY-**ALONGS** | GEOFF **DUGMORE**

Rhythm

Every Drummer Needs It

Issue 294 | £5.99

SPECIAL TRIBUTE

GINGER BAKER

What every drummer can learn from the maverick sticksman

HIS SET-UPS & SOUND

HIS INFLUENCES & HEROES

HIS SOLOS & DRUM BATTLES

How to Play...

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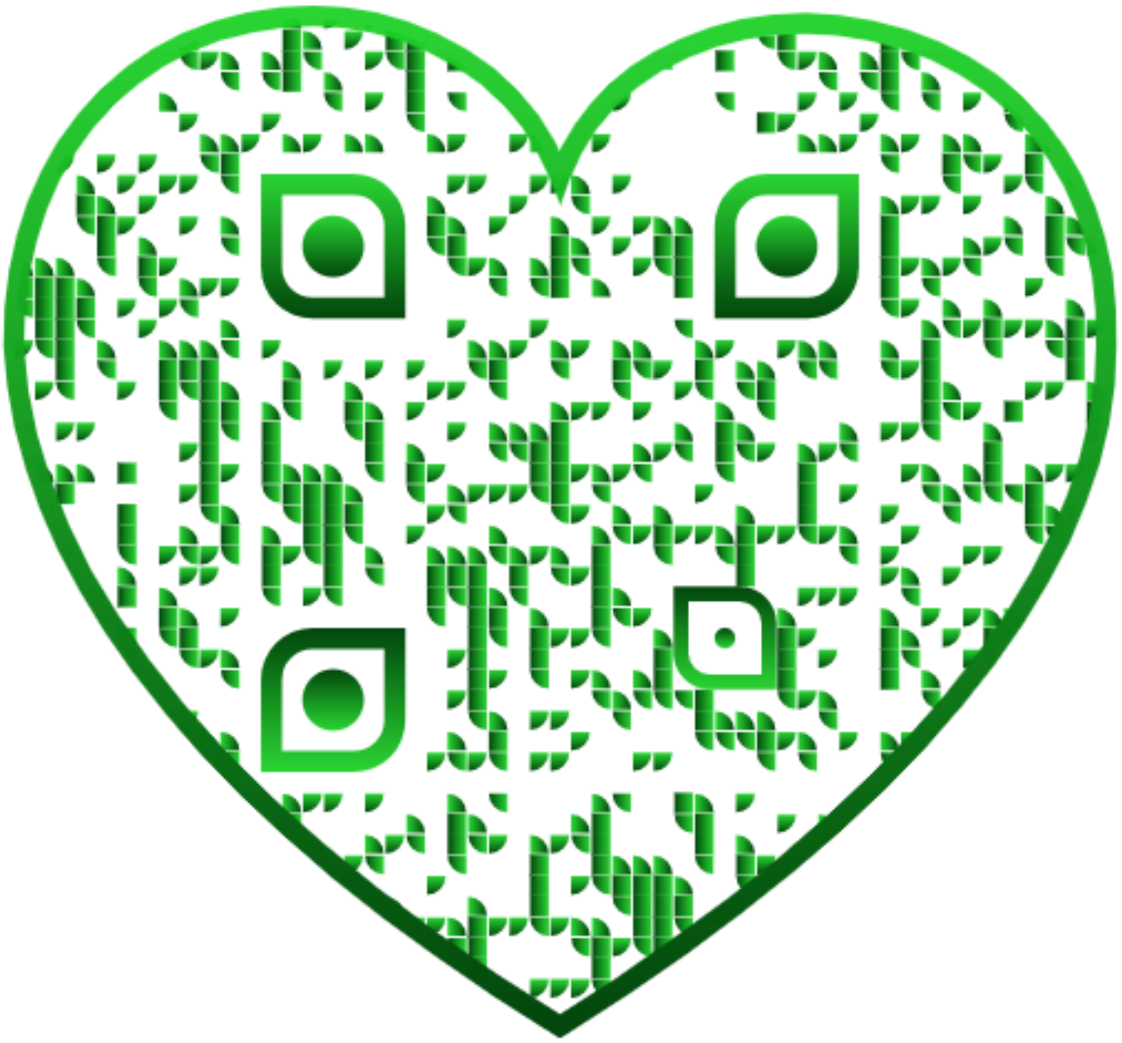

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HELLO AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

In this issue, we are delighted to welcome Chris Welch back to the Rhythm fold. As a journalist on the *Melody Maker* in the '60s and '70s, Chris witnessed first-hand the explosion of Britain's greatest rock bands – such as Led Zeppelin, The Who, Cream, The Rolling Stones, Genesis and Pink Floyd – onto the world stage; sharing and reporting on those incredible journeys with the musicians making their mark. "Going out and seeing all those bands and writing about the new stars was the best job in the world!" Chris enthuses. "The London scene was buzzing at that time, and it was such a privilege to be part of it."

As a drummer himself, Chris always had a particular affinity for his fellow beatmakers and in this issue he pays a personal, and poignant, tribute to his old friend – the one and only Ginger Baker. "Ginger changed rock drumming forever and I was mesmerised from the first time I saw him play", Chris remembers. "He had everything I wanted to see in a drummer – passion, technique and a broad musical horizon. He wasn't perfect, and the fact that he broke all the rules made him even more exciting. Ginger really believed in himself too – it's what made him so special – and, for him, it was never just about playing arrangements and reading charts. He taught us all so much and, as I was with him from the very beginning of his drumming career, right through to the very end of it, I'm delighted to have the opportunity to celebrate his legacy with the readers of Rhythm."

Also in this issue, we catch up with Andrew Marshall – currently touring the world with pop sensation Billie Eilish, session supremo Geoff Dugmore chooses his *6 Of The Best*, Big Country's Mark Brzezicki, Steve Gorman and Steve Smith all make a welcome return, and Yard Gavrilovic gives us the low-down on teching for some of the biggest names in the business.

By the time you read this, Rhythm will be patrolling the aisles of the annual NAMM convention in Anaheim, California, checking out all the new gear. Be sure to keep an eye on all things social to see what's going to be coming your way in the not too distant future.

Hope you enjoy the issue and look forward to seeing you next time...

Louise King

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Contributing to this issue...

Chris Welch

Chris is a writer and drummer. He was features editor of *Melody Maker* in the '60s and '70s where he wrote about Cream, The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, Genesis and many more. He is the author of bestselling books on Yes, Cream, David Bowie, Vivian Stanshall, Led Zeppelin, John Bonham and Eric Clapton. "Here is a photo of myself (left) with Marilyne my wife (smoking a St. Moritz menthol cigarette), and Ginger Baker, seen on our way to a gig by the Baker Gurvitz Army, in Paris, in 1975. Ginger is probably shouting directions at the French driver. Or he could be shouting abuse!"

My drumming New Year's resolution

"To buy a brand new, shiny, limited edition classic drum kit and play in a big band with all the power of Sonny Payne tearing into *The Atomic Mr Basie* album."

David West

"I still remember my first assignment for Rhythm some 16 years ago, heading out to interview Andy Strachan from The Living End armed with a handheld tape recorder and a notepad. Too many interviews to count later, I've met my heroes, like Steve Gadd and Zigaboo Modeliste, and even faced the withering gaze of Ginger Baker and lived to tell the tale. I'm thrilled that Rhythm is back in action!"

My drumming New Year's resolution

"I have a big pile of drumming books to work through next year, including Stanton Moore's *Take It To The Street*, which should help me sharpen up my press roll."

Rich Chamberlain

Raised on his dad's AC/DC records, Rich has been channelling his inner Phil Rudd since he was a nipper, with varying degrees of success. And while today there's little danger of him laying down thundering grooves at a packed stadium any time soon, since first joining the Rhythm team 10 years ago Rich has been able to put the questions to rock royalty such as the aforementioned Mr Rudd. Hey, someone's gotta do it...

My drumming New Year's resolution

"2020 is the year that I finally simplify my set-up to one up, one down. Yes, that second floor tom that I've been using like a huge novelty drinks coaster has to go!"

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Image: Jorgen Angel/Getty

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Beat!

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Image: Andreas Neumann

BRAVE NEW WORLD

British Drum Co. announces Nicko McBrain as its new international ambassador

When Rhythm was invited to the British Drum Co. headquarters for a top secret announcement, the glint in the eyes of the BDC team told us it was something big. Before the official announcement party heralding Iron Maiden's Nicko McBrain as the BDC's latest signing (held fittingly at the home of Trooper beer, Robinsons Brewery) we had a sit down with the man of the hour and got the low-down on his switch from Sonor.

Brimming with enthusiasm for his new partnership with the Manchester-based company, the Iron Maiden sticksman tells us, "I'm very, very excited to have come to BDC. I have committed to this wonderful family and they've embraced me, as I have them."

For a relatively new drum company (formed in 2015), British Drum Co. is already making sizeable waves in the industry. This is largely down to the reputation of BDC's master drum builder and CEO, Keith Keough. It becomes abundantly clear from the off that reuniting with Keith is one of Nicko's primary attractions to his new family. Nicko tells us, "Keith was making hand-built drums for Premier when we first met in 2011. I was completely blown away by the guy's craftsmanship and the way he makes drums – it was just stunning. We had a great relationship."

The aptly enormous kit that Keith and his team have produced for Nicko will accompany him on Maiden's *Legacy of the Beast* tour next year. As they are currently between the second and third leg of the tour, the new kit features the same custom Derek Riggs 'Eddie' artwork as his previous Sonor SQ2. Added touches include an Exo-Tone 'Legacy of the Beast' strip and a play on the usual Made in England badge which reads, "Maiden England". All shell hardware is finished in Smoked Chrome which is a first for BDC.

The kit is fundamentally a Legend Series which is constructed from 100% Scandinavian birch and features a cold-press moulded 6mm shell, 45-degree bearing edges and 2-ply reinforcement rings. The sizes are Nicko's go-to predominantly square sizes which are 6"x8", 8"x8", 10"x10", 12"x12", 13"x13", 14"x14", 15"x15" and 16"x16" rack toms, 18"x16" floor tom and 24"x18" bass drum.

Although no plans have yet been announced for signature products, we can safely assume that there are some in the works. Speaking of which, we can't help but notice there's no snare drum here...

Visit www.britishdrumco.com for more details.

OFFBEATS

HERE'S TO GINGER

Eric Clapton will pay tribute to the great Ginger Baker with a special one-off show in February. Eric Clapton and Friends will nod to Baker and old Slowhand's work together with Cream and Blind Faith on 17th February at London's Eventim Apollo. Visit **www.eventimapollo.com**.

Image: Frank Hoensch/Getty

DW'S FAMILY VALUES

DW have paid tribute to some of their seminal drummers and founders with their Family Reunion. The get-together of personalities involved with the brand since before 1990 was held to mark the reissue of DW's original maple Santa Monica shell. Chad Wackermann, Jim Keltner and Josh Freese were among those in attendance.

SUMMER OF DRUMS

Drum heroes galore are heading to the UK next summer thanks to a slew of stunning announcements. Joey Kramer is over on these shores with Aerosmith in July for shows in Manchester and London, while Matt Cameron and Pearl Jam head up the gigantic BST show at Hyde Park during that same month.

Image: Kevin Mazur/Getty

MATTHEWS GETS SLAMMED

Rhythm GRAND SLAM

Ian Matthews is helping drumming take over Wembley Stadium this year as part of Rhythm's huge Grand Slam event.

The Kasabian drummer is the first name announced for the gigantic show, which takes place at the iconic London venue on 7th and 8th November.

Rhythm Grand Slam, which is presented in conjunction with *Planet Rock*, will see an array of top names put on performances, clinics, educational seminars and more. It really is your chance to get up close and personal with some of the finest drummers on the planet and take top tips from them home afterwards.

Discussing his addition to the line-up, Ian said: "I'm delighted to be invited to be part of the Rhythm Grand Slam and I'm excited the magazine has been reignited and brought back to life. I've got copies of the mag going back to the '80s and was a subscriber for the last 10 years. It's a fantastic magazine."

As a co-owner of the British Drum Company, there will, of course, be only one choice for Matthews when it comes to gear when the Grand Slam rolls into town.

"I'll be playing on my own BDC drums", he said. "It feels quite special to be involved in that way."

For all things Grand Slam, take a look at **www.rhythmgrandslam.com.**

Image: James Cumpsty

BLOCK ROCKIN' BEATS

Fancy spending an afternoon in the company of some of the finest minds in the world of drumming? Then you won't want to miss Beats Working, a one-day extravaganza taking place soon.

Beats Working is at Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music on 31st May 2020 and features a line-up of Steve White, Dom Famularo, Pete Lockett, Kaz Rodriguez, Pete Cater and Ian Palmer.

Palmer is also the brains behind the concert, of which Rhythm is proud to be a media partner, and he told us all about how the concept for the show came to be.

"I ran The World's Greatest Drummer Concert over ten years right from its inception back in 2007", he explains. "We featured literally some of the finest drummers in the world including Steve Gadd, Benny Greb, Keith Carlock and Steve Smith.

"After ten years of working these concerts, I wanted to change things a little and create a festival of drumming in the classic sense, featuring solo performances.

"This afternoon show at the Royal Northern College of music is a unique event with dear friends and drummers. I really hope this concert gains the support that the World's Greatest Drummer Concert did over the years. I think there is space once again for this type of event on the UK drumming calendar."

Tickets for Beats Working are on sale now priced £25, plus £1 booking fee. Doors open at 1.15pm with performances due to kick off at 2pm. Visit www.rncm.ac.uk to get more details of what's on.

Hit Like A Girl champion De'Arcus Curry is the celebrity spokesperson for 2020's competition.

HIT LIKE A GIRL IS BACK

HLAG returns bigger and bolder than ever in 2020

The massive drumming talent search for female drummers, percussionists and beatmakers opens for entries on Monday 2nd March. Stickswomen have until Sunday 12th April to put themselves into the frame to take the coveted titles and bag themselves a treasure trove of prizes.

To enter, players must enter a performance video of themselves during that time window above. From there, weekly winners will be selected by judges from the Sabian Education Network. The next step will be to impress the public in an online vote, before then moving on to the final round, which will be judged by a team of all-star judges. Said judges include the likes of Jojo Mayer and Andrew Marshall (working with Billie Eilish, see the feature on page 52). As you can see, to win you need to bring your A-game, but just wait until you check out what is up for grabs for those who come out on top.

The competition is split into multiple age categories, with winners of each section able to take away thousands of pounds worth of mouth-watering gear, scholarships and performance opportunities.

Meanwhile, former Hit Like A Girl champion De'Arcus Curry has been announced as the celebrity spokesperson for this year's event.

"De'Arcus was our very first Champion back in 2012 and she is well on her way to becoming one of the world's elite drum artists", Hit Like A Girl executive director David Levine explains. "Along with players like Anika Nilles, Jordan West, Elise Trouw, Helen De La Rosa, Venzella Joy and others — many of whom also participated in HLAG over the years — De'Arcus is part of a new wave of female drummers that are changing the world."

Winners will be revealed on 18 May 2020. For more details head on over to www.hitlikeagirlcontest.com.

OFFBEATS

THE GOOD LIFE

We're all familiar with the incredible work of John Good, but a new documentary delves into the life and backstory of the DW Drums founder. The one-hour feature includes contributions from drumming A-listers such as Neil Peart, JR Robinson and Tommy Clufetos. *Masters of Resonance: The Legend of DW Drums* is available now on YouTube.

LILLINGER'S SESSIONS

German sticksman Christian Lillinger has teamed up with Meinl for a new album. *The Meinl Session* features a solo section and a full-band recording. Lillinger said: "Everything relied on spontaneity and was captured in real-time on film."

STARS WOW BIMM

BIMM London saw out 2019 in style with a pair of grade-A masterclasses. During December, Omar Hakim and Snarky Puppy stopped by and treated BIMM London students to jaw-dropping playing and stellar advice-galore. Take a look at www.bimm.ac.uk for more

HAIL CHARLIE!

Image: JGeorge Pimentel/Getty

We love Charlie Watts. You love Charlie Watts. Seriously, who doesn't love the iconic Stones drummer? Author Mike Edison sure adores the stylish sticksman, as he has penned *Sympathy From The Drummer: Why Charlie Watts Matters*, a weighty 264-page tome devoted to Charlie's 50-plus years of drumming perfection with the world's finest rock 'n' roll band. The book, published by Backbeat, is out now.

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SNAPSHOT
This Moment In History

Jocke Wallgren

Amon Amarth

How the mighty have *risen*... We asked the death metal legends' drummer Jocke what the story was behind their incredible drum riser?

"...We wanted to take it to the next level. Instead of just changing the stage props we came up with the idea to raise the drums for a couple of songs. It's inspired by the rock/metal bands from when we were kids such as Iron Maiden..."

How does it feel to play at that height?

"It feels great... The view is spectacular and I can see every single one of the audience from there."

Best thing about playing live?

"The best thing about playing live is just that; playing live. The energy the audience gives back to us on stage is incredible and since it's live music, it's very honest and anything can happen. I truly enjoy performing."

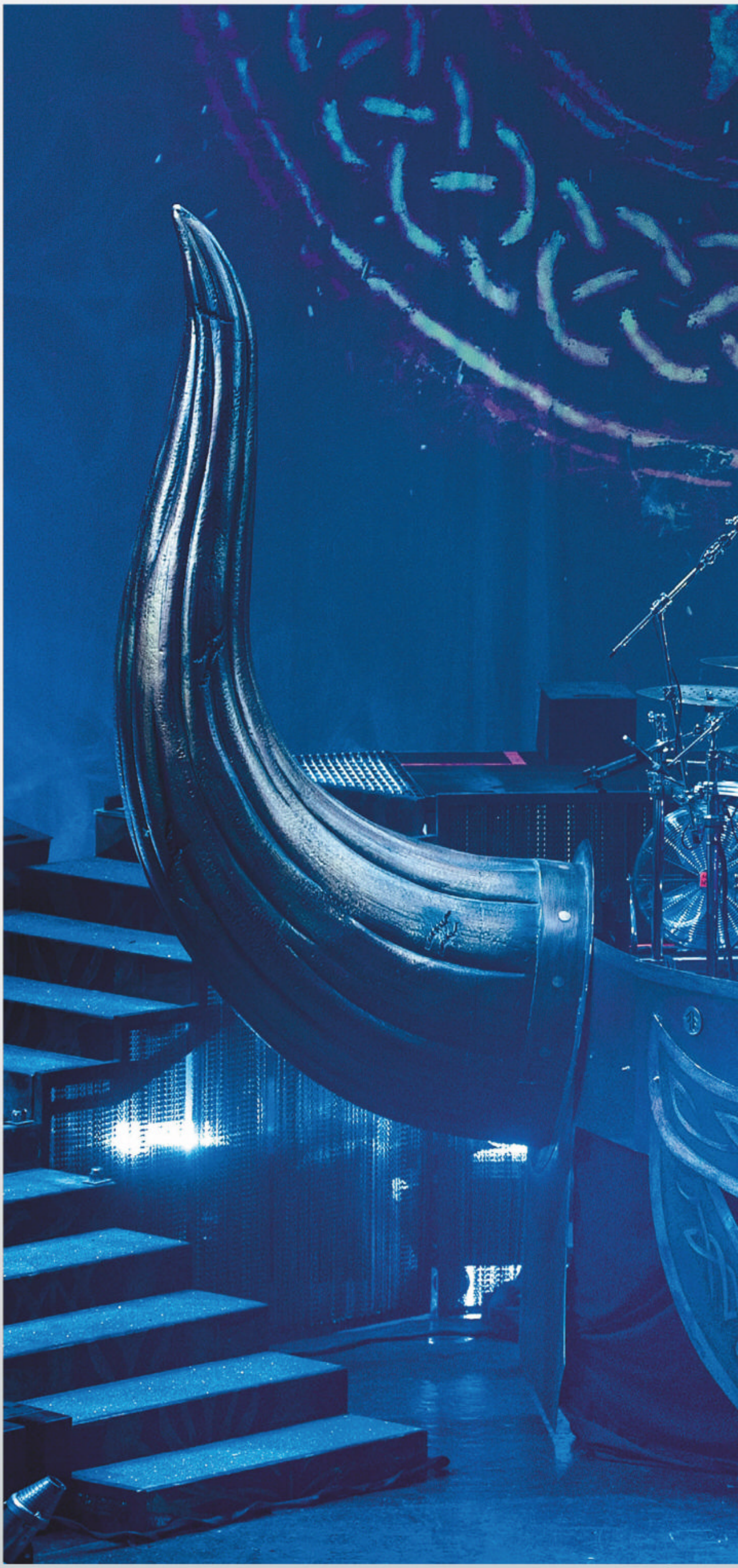


Image: Katja Ogrin/Getty

Steve Gorman

The Black Crowes / Trigger Hippy

Still evolving as the Crowes fly again

Welcome back

You've just released a book detailing your time with The Black Crowes, did that make you re-evaluate your journey as a drummer through the years?

"I've always been aware of where I was as a drummer on each record and how I evolved. It's an easy story, when we made our first record I had only been playing the drums for two years. I was way in over my head, but I got it done. Three years later on the second record, that time had been spent playing over 350 shows and working with a pace and intensity that I had never imagined before so I was a totally different drummer by then. By the third album I was, for the first time, thinking about different drum sounds and thinking how the drums were miked and my dynamics. On the first record, I had other things to worry about, like getting used to playing with a click track."

How have you changed as a drummer in that time?

"My greatest strength as a drummer has always been to know what I'm supposed to be doing and not be doing.... When we played live I didn't listen to myself, I listened to everyone else. It was a team concept. Part of that came from me starting so late. At 21, I realised I don't have time to go be Keith Moon. I'd only owned a drum kit for three months when I started playing with Chris and Rich [Robinson]."

How about your kit – has that changed a lot from early Crowes to what you play today?

"The only changes I've ever made are that on some kits I had two floor toms, but most of the time I didn't. I've only ever played a four or five-piece kit. Often, if I had a second floor tom it was just used as a drinks holder!"

How do you feel about the recently announced Black Crowes reunion, featuring the Robinson brothers and an all-new touring line-up?

"I knew [Rich and Chris Robinson] would come back together as soon as they started making fun of each other for playing Black Crowes' songs. They had a field day in the press making fun of each other and every time I saw that I thought, they're gonna feel pretty dumb when they get back together... My two feelings for the Black Crowes will always be gratitude and sadness. We didn't accomplish anywhere near what we could have but we still got a lot out of it and left behind music that will stand up over time."

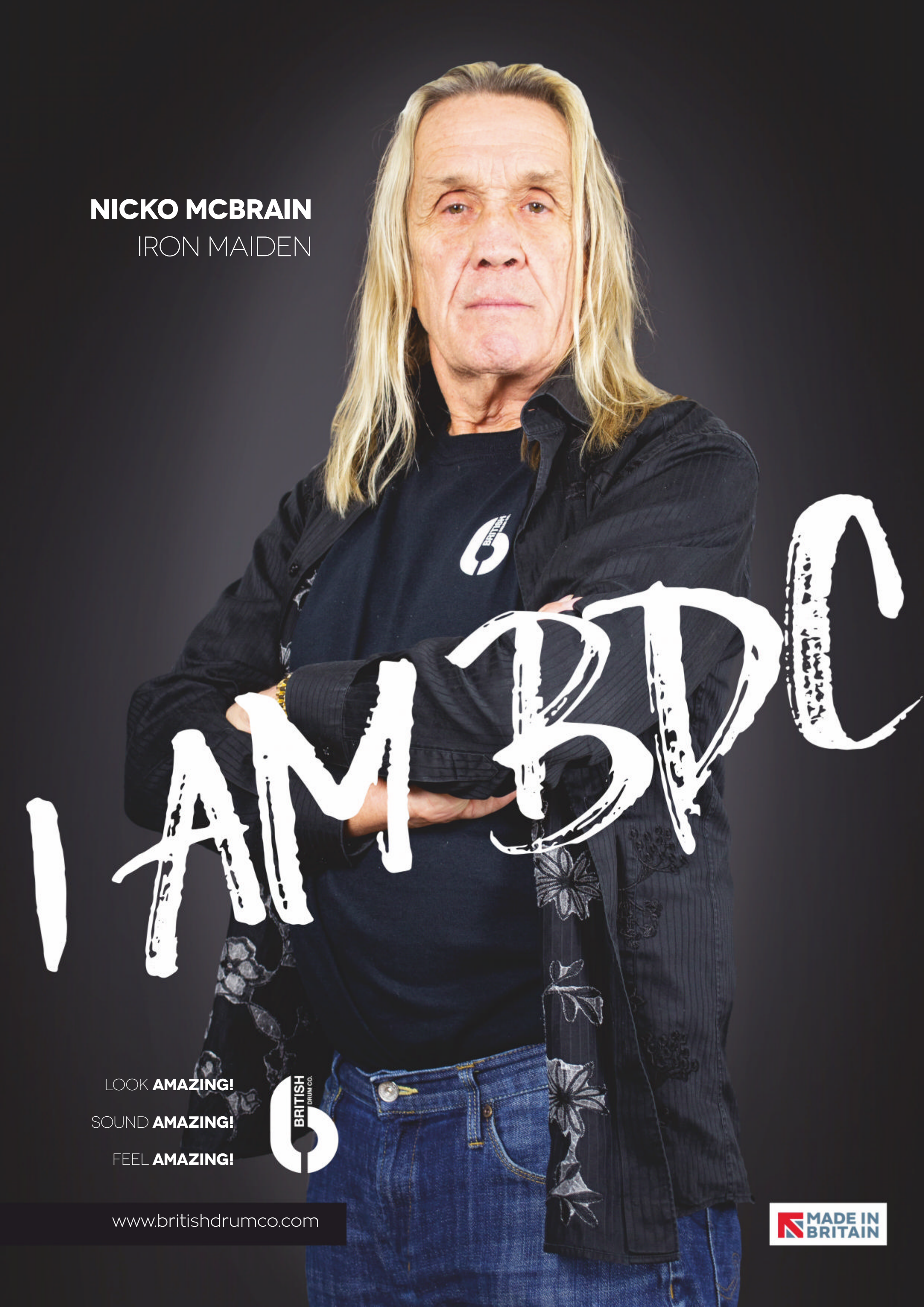
You released a new album with your band Trigger Hippy in 2019, what plans do you have for 2020?

"We have Trigger Hippy shows coming in 2020. We want to come to Europe and I definitely think we'd find an audience in the UK. It's a question of getting the right offer. My role as a drummer in Trigger Hippy is the same as the role I had in The Black Crowes, it's just that now I have a lot more control.... My goal is to get to a place where we are touring and recording constantly...in 2020 that's a difficult thing to do. In Trigger Hippy, everyone's opinion is welcome, everything is on the table and it's a democratic process. My role is to run the show from the back seat."

Hard to Handle: The Life and Death of the Black Crowes – A Memoir is out now.

Image: Scott Willis

NICKO MCBRAIN
IRON MAIDEN



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MADE IN BRITAIN

Image: Rhona Murphy

Introducing

BRANDON CROOK – THE SHERLOCKS

An indie band of brothers despite the odd flying drumstick...

What was your introduction to drumming?

"I started at school. I took some lessons but it was all just patterns on the snare and I wasn't really interested. I just stopped going. I watched this music channel on telly where it would show you basic drum lessons so I watched that and just copied. I just wanted to play songs. My brother Kiaran [The Sherlock's frontman] started writing songs and we started jamming as a band, playing local working men's clubs so I just started learning songs like [Arctic Monkeys'] 'I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor'. I learnt more just through jamming songs with the band. We're all pretty much self-taught in The Sherlocks."

Has being self-taught had a major impact on your playing style?

"I honestly believe people who are self-taught have more feel to their music. One of Kiaran's friends is a top-level piano player but some people like

that, when they get into a studio they can't play with a band. He came into the studio with us but it was out of his comfort zone and he couldn't play it in the studio. I ended up playing it on the track and I can't even play the piano! It's like we can't read music but just jam well together. With my playing, I use the toms a lot, especially the floor tom which I use to drive the verses and then go onto the ride and I play that as a crash in the chorus. That's my style. I don't know why, but it just works."

You have two sets of brothers in your band. Does that make it an intense place to be at times?

"We all get on. We used to argue about stupid things. We had a gig where Kiaran thought I'd gone out of time but he'd sung something wrong. He thought it was me and I knew it was him. He looked at me funny and I threw one of my drum sticks at him. He picked it up and threw it back at me! But since we started taking the band more seriously we've grown up and got on."

You have a UK tour in February and March, what else is coming up?

"Our second album *Under Your Sky* is out but we're already writing for our third album. The way the industry is now it's gone back to how it was with The Beatles with people wanting two albums a year." **Rich Chamberlain**

Key kit: *Natal drums, Zildjian cymbals, Evans heads.*

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Image: Gordon Smith

Welcome back

Mark Brzezicki

Big Country / Sessions

The art of playing for the song...

You're touring with Big Country for the 35th anniversary of the *Steeltown* album. How do you approach that music now?

"I can normally remember the drumming instinctively, it's like riding a bike. I get most of the parts pretty damn accurate but to fine-tune I go on the internet and look at what I was doing back then because your styles grow as a drummer, they evolve, you get new ideas and inspiration so within certain grooves you add different fills and things. It's one of those double-edged swords where you have to be careful to do the key drum fills so as not to disappoint the die-hard fans who seem to know more about my drumming than I do. I see them in the front row playing the same fills as me, which is a bit strange. I try to keep it as close to the original as possible while still keeping it fresh."

Have you been busy with studio work?

"I've been doing a lot of session work in Nashville. I've got a place out there and I've been working with a brilliant producer called Chas Sandford. He produced Stevie Nicks, Chicago, Ronnie Wood, and a load of others. I've just done his wife Melanie Sandford's solo album, and I'm also doing stuff in the UK. I've just played with KT Tunstall last week. It's a cover of a John Lennon track, 'Gimme Some Truth', the profits are going to the War Child charity. I'm off to America in February doing another couple of albums so I'm keeping myself very busy."

What's the key to working in Nashville?

"It's all about your feel. I've been going to Nashville for six years or more and it's been fantastic. The Nashville drumming community has really embraced me. It's all about playing songs because the way they work out there is like clockwork. You arrive at 9 in the morning, the drums are set up by 10, you get a sound by 11 o'clock, and by 3 in the afternoon you've done a whole album. It's incredibly disciplined, but it's not all about country music either. It's very eclectic."

What do you have planned for your January clinic tour?

"The clinic thing is important for me because I rarely do them. I decided I should stick my head above the parapet. I've got a certain amount of technique, but at the same time, it's the ability to learn a song quickly, understand what they may need and keep that inventiveness. I've always felt that if you do a session, try to have the enthusiasm and creativity as if it was your band, so you're bringing something to the table that they wouldn't get by asking just anyone. It's a delicate balance, but I'll talk through that, which is what I want to do the clinic for, to explain the musicality side. It's all about playing songs by the end of the day because that's how I've earned my living."

David West

Clinic Dates Visit www.facebook.com/BrzezickiDrum

Steve Smith

'Eternity's Breath – Part 1'
Visions Of The Emerald Beyond (1975)
Mahavishnu Orchestra
Drummer: Narada Michael Walden

"The album *Visions of the Emerald Beyond* by the Mahavishnu Orchestra, released in 1975, had a far-reaching influence on my drumming concepts and vocabulary. The drummer on the album is Narada Michael Walden. When I heard the opening track, 'Eternity's Breath – Part 1', I was blown away by the sound, intensity and ideas coming out of my speakers. The drumming was so over-the-top that I listened to that track over and over again.

"Narada's playing style was a unique synthesis of Benny Benjamin, Mitch Mitchell, John Bonham, Buddy Miles, Bernard Purdie and Billy Cobham. The original Mahavishnu Orchestra burst onto the music scene in 1971 with Billy Cobham on drums. Narada had a strong background in groove playing growing up in the Detroit, Michigan area and it was Billy's influence that unleashed the fusion monster in him.

"It's important to remember that drumming doesn't only come from drumming, it comes from loving the music you enjoy listening to and, most importantly, your playing is the product of the music you actually play and the people that you play with. Narada *became* the drummer in Mahavishnu and that environment fuelled his rapid development to become one of the greatest drummers in music.

"Narada's fills used double bass drums in an unprecedented way. Narada approximated Billy Cobham's super-human chops by breaking up the fills between his hands and feet. That concept is used by many drummers today and it started with Narada. Another concept that he instigated was using double bass drums in a high-energy groove, keeping the bass drums funky and syncopated. Narada also had a smooth double stroke roll he used to great effect.

A year after *Visions...* came out I was touring and recording with two of the members of that Mahavishnu line-up, violinist Jean-Luc Ponty and bassist Ralphe Armstrong. (I recorded Ponty's classic *Enigmatic Ocean* in the summer of 1977 when I was 22 years old.) Jean-Luc wanted me to play, in his words, "A Billy Cobham kit." I bought my first double bass Sonor kit in January 1977: 2x24" bass drums, 7"x14" snare, 10" 12" 13" rack toms, 16" and 18" floor toms. While on tour with Jean-Luc, Ralphe Armstrong referenced Narada frequently with statements like, "Narada wouldn't have played that," or "Narada would have played this," and he'd try to explain a drumming concept to me. Ralphe could be intimidating but I did learn from his input.

"Narada's influence continued when I played with Journey. His approach translated perfectly to what Journey needed to support the R&B feel that singer Steve Perry was looking for and the rock-fusion energy that guitarist Neal Schon needed."

Image: James Cumpsty

Starclassic

WALNUT/BIRCH

REIMAGINING A NEW SONIC INSPIRATION

The evolution of Starclassic from maple, birch, bubinga, birch/bubinga continues, and now - after intense analysis, rigorous research, development and product testing - we have arrived at the latest Starclassic modern development, Starclassic Walnut/Birch.

We discovered the perfect ratio of walnut to birch that produced a superior quality of low-to-mid frequency warmth that perfectly complemented the clear attack and higher frequency projection of birch. The sound is familiar, but distinctively different from Tama sounds of the past.

The Starclassic series continues to be a representation of our collective drum-making passion, wisdom and pursuit to offer refined and differentiated sounds. Starclassic Walnut/Birch defines our commitment to evolve our drum sounds and inspire the contemporary drummer.

TAMA®

TamaGBI YouTube TamaUK @tamauk @TAMAUK

Image: James Cumpsty

IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Get found out for being brilliant says **Emily Dolan Davies**

We've all had that feeling... what am I doing? I don't belong here! I'm going to get caught out! I'm not good enough!

Imposter syndrome has certainly been the unwanted linchpin of my drumming life. For years, I was convinced that at any given moment, someone was going to knock on my door and call me out as a fraud! In all honesty, I still feel that way sometimes, but have found some strategies to reverse it, and to feel stronger and more confident. So, when that creeping voice of doubt rears its ugly head, I ask myself, what triggered me to feel like an imposter?

Personally, it can be something on social media, a conversation, or just being in the room with people I don't feel 'good enough' for. Whatever the answer, I set about trying to debunk it, by building a 'case' and gathering 'evidence' from past experiences that prove it can't be true. I think about people I've played with, shows I've done, difficult situations I've overcome and compliments I've been given. I remember other times I felt like this, where it all turned out OK.

The stronger my 'case' gets, the more silly the initial reaction feels.

If that isn't working, I look at the situation and think do I need this in my life? More often than not, the answer is no, and the power of choice becomes incredibly empowering. I start to think about ways to avoid this situation (social media profile, person or whatever triggered me). Next, I think about all the positive versions of this situation that exist in my life, and as soon as I start to feel grateful for all the things I already have, it instantly takes all the energy and pressure out of the present stressor. I start thinking, oh actually this isn't *that* important, and by default, I become more relaxed, which (hilariously) brings me back to being a better version of myself anyway!

It's so easy to get stuck in the headspace of feeling like an imposter. It can be crippling, and sometimes even becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. I hope if you feel this way now, or in the future, these strategies give you a new way to fight it, and at the very least, please know that you're not alone.

www.adrummersguideto.com

Rudiment Of The Month

The Flam

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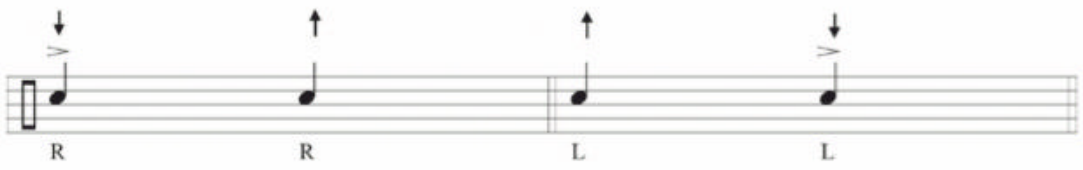
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This issue's rudiment is the flam. It's the cornerstone of the family of flam rudiments and one which requires the ability to play a flam leading with either hand. This sounds straightforward enough; a flam is simply one hand preceding the other with a quieter grace note. However, it's a figure that is frequently misplayed, with most drummers tending to favour one flam direction, a trait which can sometimes materialise in two of the same direction flams mistakenly being played but just with different dynamics.

One of the keys to developing hand-to-hand flams is the concept that the hands are never in the same place, high or low, at the same time. This encourages the hand playing the grace note to remain at a low height while the opposite hand has moved high ready to play the next accent. Developing this takes careful practise but like anything will yield results if done slowly and deliberately, really listening for the placement of the grace notes.

Heads up

A grace note is a quiet note which precedes another usually louder note. In classical terms, it's referred to as an acciaccatura. In drumming notation, a single grace note before an accent is played as a flam while two grace notes before an accent would be a drag.

OFFBEATS

HERE COME THE BAYS

Andy Gangadeen is bringing The Bays back for a run of drum-packed shows in 2020. The drum 'n' bass icon will be at the kit for the jazz improv maestros with a residency every Sunday afternoon at The Underdog, London Bridge starting on 2 February before their main launch at Jazz Cafe on 6 April. Fellow drummers Kaz Rodriguez, Beanie and Oli Wiseman are also part of the revived band's line-up.

Image: Tom Oldham

HUSBAND SHARES SOME WISDOM

Fancy taking playing tips from a genuine master of the kit? Then you'll want to check out Gary Husband's brand new series of videocasts. Priced at £8 each, the six clips cover topics such as open-handed playing, funk drumming, the kit and independence, and co-ordination. Videos range from 25 to 45 minutes in length and downloaders will receive MP4s alongside MP3s and PDFS where applicable. Check the full series out at garyhusband.com.

HE WAS A ROBOT

The ex-percussionist with legendary electronic music pioneers Kraftwerk, Wolfgang Flür, is heading out on tour in March for five dates across the UK. He was with the notoriously reclusive group during their golden era from 1973 to 1987. Claims he invented the electronic drums they used throughout the '70s were disputed by band founders (and patent holders) Florian Schneider and Ralf Hütter but he was certainly playing e-drums before most of us.

FIRST LOOK

VULCAN DARK MASTER CYMBALS

Where Italian design meets traditional Turkish craftsmanship... now there's something you don't hear every day. Born from the slopes of Mount Etna, these volcanic-themed cymbals are actually crafted in the home of cymbal making – Istanbul, Turkey. Produced using traditional hammering and lathing techniques, Vulcan Cymbals are manufactured in small quantities by hand, resulting in each cymbal possessing its own unique character.

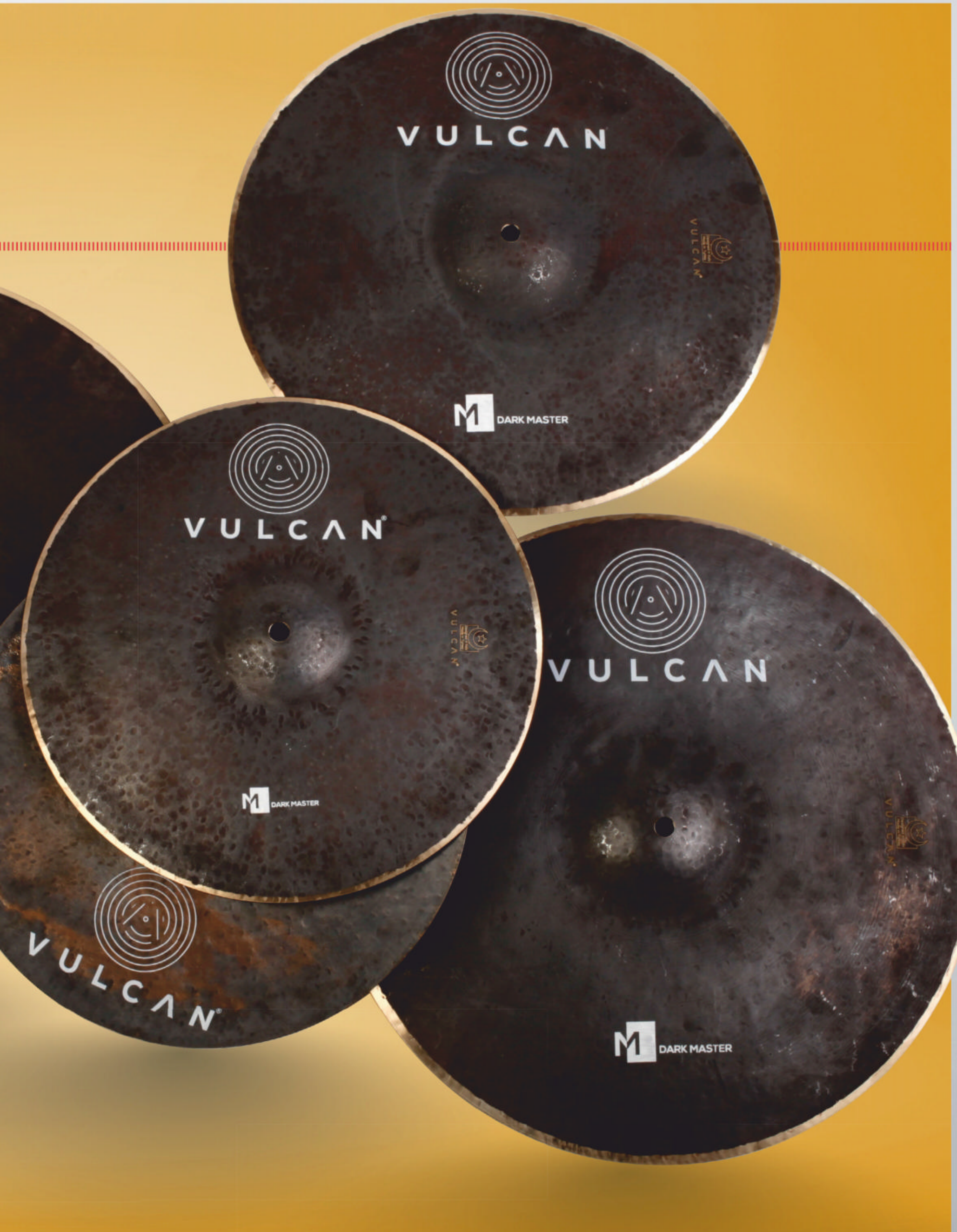
Despite being a very young company, Vulcan already boasts a wide selection of cymbal lines. With a total of 12 product ranges, Vulcan aims to provide something for every type of player, regardless of stylistic tendencies. The full selection of series includes Classic, Antique, Rock, Legend, Etna, Legacy, EFX, White Master, Dark Master, Vintage '50s, Papa and Vesuvio.

The Dark Master series pictured are unlathed top and bottom except for a small lip around the edge. These interesting looking cymbals possess a dark tonality while offering a more articulated ping and complex harmonics. Aimed primarily at jazz players, the Dark Master is intended to be versatile enough for any genre.

Brand new to the UK market, Vulcan Cymbals are exclusive to PMT stores in a recently announced partnership. Suggested retail prices look to be just under that of more established premium brands, but we expect street prices to be slightly lower. For example, crashes range between £199 for 16" and £269 for 19"; ride cymbals go from £299 for 20" and £435 for a mighty 24"; and a pair of 14" hi-hats will set you back £329.

Having already attracted interest from newly appointed endorsees Mel Gaynor and Robert Brian, there looks to be some hype building around this Italian cymbal brand. To see what all the fuss is about, check out our full review of the Dark Master series in the next issue of Rhythm.

PRICE: £89 - £435
www.vulcancymbals.com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FIRST LOOK

SHINY NEW DRUM STUFF TO LUST AFTER

1. Highwood E13ment Snare
Price: From £369
Highwood's take on the classic beaded aluminium shell, the 1.5mm seamless spun shell has a carbon-coated finish and features chrome over brass tube lugs, 2.3mm hoops, a nickel Drumworks throw and Puresound snare wires.
www.highwooddrums.co.uk

2. BreakBeat Jewellery
Price: From £116.50
Ethically created using recycled cymbal bronze with recycled silver and gold, these beautifully crafted bespoke bracelets, rings and cufflinks are a must for any drum enthusiast.
www.facebook.com/BreakBeatJewellery

3. Ahead Adjustable Vintage Style Cymbal Fizzler with Rivets
Price: £16
For that riveted sound without drilling holes in your cymbals. This brushed aluminium contraption attaches to the cymbal stand thread and adds that unmistakable decay to your cymbal. A central dial allows for fine-tuning and each arm can be folded up when not in use.
www.aheaddrumsticks.com

4. Soundbrenner Core and Core Steel
Price: Core, €199 (£169); Core Steel, €299 (£254)
Since the release of the wearable Pulse metronome a few years ago, Soundbrenner is back with the upgraded Core and Core Steel models. The smartwatch functions feature a vibrating metronome, magnetic tuner and decibel meter.
www.soundbrenner.com

5. True Tuner Head FX
Price: £20
Add some character to your backbeat with the Head FX system. The base is suction-mounted to the circular drum dampeners which stay in position, allowing for interchangeable effects. Each pack includes dampeners, a Head FX base and a shaker or tambourine jingle attachment.
www.tru-tuner.myshopify.com

6. Vic Firth RE-MIX Brushes
Developed with renowned percussionist Pete Lockett (see p.80), these brushes are designed to offer a varied sound palette to percussionists and kit players alike. The collection includes four different models; Broomcorn (pictured), African Grass, Birch Dowels and Rattan/Birch.
www.vicfirth.com

7. Natal Pro Series Hardware
Price: From £89
Natal's flagship hardware, consisting of single and double pedals, hi-hat, snare and boom cymbal stand has been treated to a complete redesign. Features include greater pedal control with an improved footboard and floating spring system, reduced tube size on the stands for portability and a smoother cymbal tilter on the boom stand.
www.nataldrums.com

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MEAZZI HOLLYWOOD CRISTALLINE KIT

Vintage CIRCA 1970

This extraordinary Italian-made set appears to be sculpted from ice crystal

Writer: **Geoff Nicholls** Images: **James Cumpsty**

The 1970's fashion for synthetic shell drums threw up some of the most adventurous designs ever. This dazzling Italian kit was made by Caldironi and Meazzi of Milan, originally the brainchild of bass player Franco Caldironi. The kit's owner, Derby-based drummer Giles Henshaw, explains, "Meazzi was an Italian distributor of musical instruments (drums, guitars, keyboards, microphones, etc.) and the kit dates back to the early–mid '70s. The Hollywood model was top-of-the-range and included both wood shelled and synthetic drums, the latter known as Cristalline.

"I got the kit off eBay about 10 years ago from a retired club drummer in Leicester. It had been in his loft for over 20 years and was caked in nicotine. I knew it was a vintage gem and on collection, the guy gave me his set of vintage Paiste 602s which he'd used with the kit!

"Meazzi were often ahead of their time and came up with some really interesting products, including electronic drums, rack systems and pedal-tuned toms. The company ceased production of the majority of their instrument range in the mid-'70s, but the drums were then rebranded as Hi-Percussion and continued into the '80s.

"The Cristalline shells are made from ¼" clear acrylic sheet, but with a rippled surface so they look like ice. The shells are roughly glued together, with no reinforcement hoops. Sizes are 22"x14" bass, 13"x9" and 14"x10" mounted toms, 16"x16" floor tom and 14"x6" metal snare.

"One interesting feature of the Cristalline shells is the bearing edges. There aren't any! The edges are sanded flat, which gives the drums a really dark and thuddy tone, great for rock. The snare drum has a brass shell, is beautifully made and sounds really sharp and is responsive to play.

"Another interesting feature of the toms and snare is that they have die-cast hoops, but the hoops don't have ears."

Meazzi described these earless hoops as 'bossless'. The tension rods pass through small gripper clips (which are like mini bass drum claws) and screw into a rotating bar inside the lug. To remove the head you loosen the rod a little until the clip slips off the ridged drum hoop and the rod hinges away from the shell. This allows the head and metal hoop to be lifted free while the tension rod remains attached to the lug. The idea is to facilitate quick head changes.

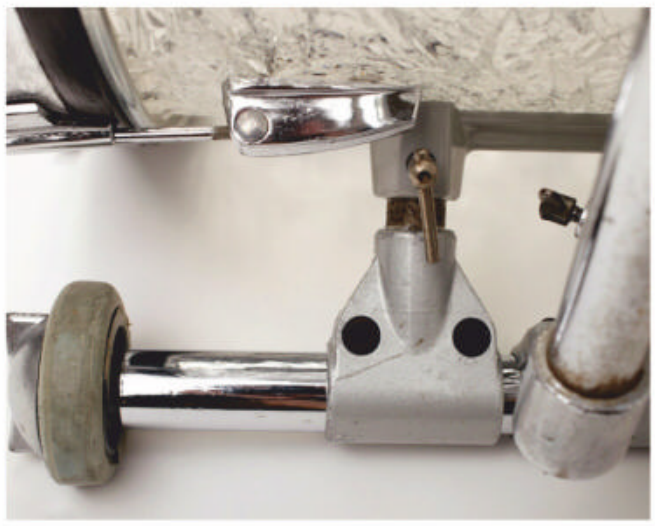
Giles adds, "The *really* interesting part of the kit is the rack system which it sits on. There are two tubular sections which attach to the bottom of the bass drum. These have wheels at either end and a number of mounting brackets for the two cymbal stands, floor tom and snare drum stand. Once set-up, the whole thing (minus hi-hat stand) can be wheeled on and off stage in one go."

ICE ICE BABY

The luminous Cristalline shells, which are even more spectacular under stage lights, were offered in clear, yellow, orange or blue.

TROLLEY DOLLY

A development of the 1930s wheeled console, Meazzi's trolley supports the entire kit, including floor tom and snare drum.



1. CHROME SNARE DRUM
The weighty 14"x6" snare drum has a brass shell and 10 Hollywood double-ended flip-off, quick-change lugs.

2. BOTTOM END SUPPORT
The bass drum shell has two support bars which are carefully slot-mounted inside the trolley frame.

3. SPRUNG CYMBAL HOLDER
This 'Rapid' cymbal tilter is typical of Caldironi's unique approach to drum set hardware.

"THE BEARING EDGES ARE SANDED FLAT, WHICH GIVES THE DRUMS A REALLY DARK AND THUDDY TONE, GREAT FOR ROCK."

OWNER, GILES HENSHAW

● FLIPPIN' 'ECK

Quick change flip-off lugs have tension rod screw bolts which are hinged on a central jointed pawl.

NEED TO KNOW

MEAZZI, HOLLYWOOD, HI-PERCUSSION, WOODING...

...All of these names were used at various times by the Italian Meazzi-Caldironi partnership on their unique drums.

DRUMS FOR GIANTS

Meazzi advertised the Hollywood Cristalline outfit as the 'Drums For Giants'.

INTERNATIONAL RENOWN

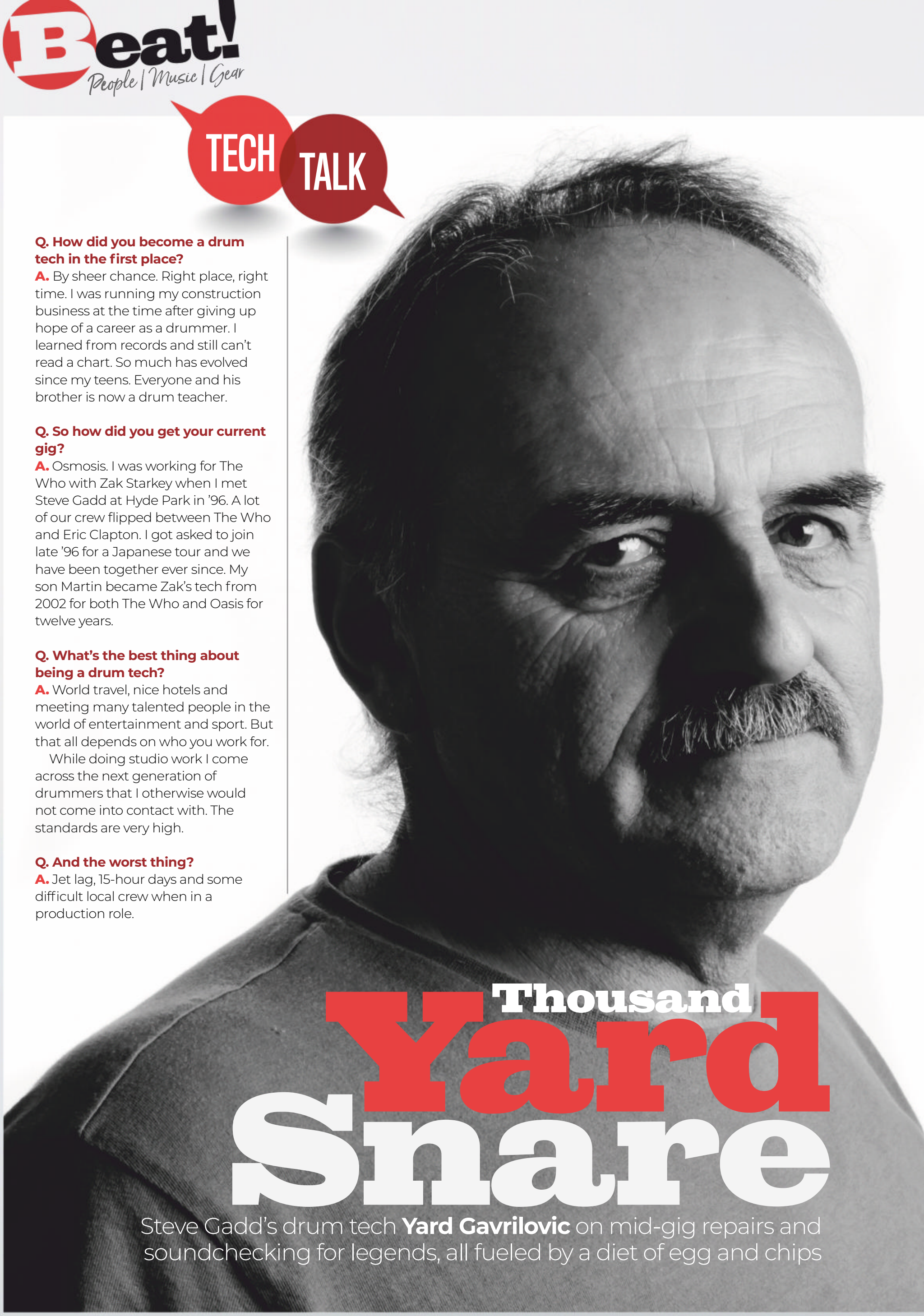
Meazzi drums were played by US stars including Max Roach and Billy Cobham, while UK stars included Pete Gill of Saxon and John Marshall of Nucleus and Soft Machine.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:
SIMON JOHN'S VINTAGE DRUM SHOW
www.vintagedrums.co.uk

TECH TALK

Thousand Yard Snare

Steve Gadd's drum tech **Yard Gavrilovic** on mid-gig repairs and soundchecking for legends, all fueled by a diet of egg and chips



Q. How did you become a drum tech in the first place?

A. By sheer chance. Right place, right time. I was running my construction business at the time after giving up hope of a career as a drummer. I learned from records and still can't read a chart. So much has evolved since my teens. Everyone and his brother is now a drum teacher.

Q. So how did you get your current gig?

A. Osmosis. I was working for The Who with Zak Starkey when I met Steve Gadd at Hyde Park in '96. A lot of our crew flipped between The Who and Eric Clapton. I got asked to join late '96 for a Japanese tour and we have been together ever since. My son Martin became Zak's tech from 2002 for both The Who and Oasis for twelve years.

Q. What's the best thing about being a drum tech?

A. World travel, nice hotels and meeting many talented people in the world of entertainment and sport. But that all depends on who you work for.

While doing studio work I come across the next generation of drummers that I otherwise would not come into contact with. The standards are very high.

Q. And the worst thing?

A. Jet lag, 15-hour days and some difficult local crew when in a production role.

Q. What is the biggest onstage nightmare that you've ever had to deal with – and how did you overcome it?

A. I wouldn't say it was a nightmare but when in San Jose I invited the late Johnny Craviotto to our gig as he wanted to see Steve Gadd perform. Steve loves his Yamaha hardware and the older, the better. He uses double pedals that are over 25 years old, of which we have two sets that have seen better days. He just loves the feel and action of Set#1 which has served him well over the years. It just so happened that the tension spring snapped on the main pedal. Spares are getting scarce. When I offered up Set#2, Steve preferred to have #1 to play. He carried on playing with the left pedal while I got on with my repair to the right pedal, laying flat out under his floor toms!

Q. What's the funniest/craziest thing that you've seen on a tour?

A. I don't do crazy! 'Crazy' is over-inflated R'n'R stories but... Gary Glitter accidentally knocking out Roger Daltrey during rehearsals on stage at Hyde Park in '96. Billy Idol gasping when, as a bellboy in *Quadrophenia,* we had put bricks in his normally empty suitcases. There are others but these people are still about!

Q. Talk us through a typical day in the life of a drum tech on a tour.

A. I always wake early but resist any attempts by others to wake them. Get professional! If on the tour bus I head into the arena for a shower firstly and grab breakfast before it gets cleared for lunch. I have a simple taste in food so gamble that I will like at least one meal per day due to the ever-increasing pressure to eat salmon, asparagus and all of that nonsense. Egg, chips and beans is the food of the workers!

By midday, those lazy sound and lighting crews have their rigs up in the air and we can get on with proper stuff on stage. Once the band risers are in place we get to work setting up, tuning or changing heads if need be. I start with a clean sheet with every drummer and do my best to follow their preferences on tuning, set up etc. Once set up and mic'd, I play the kit for soundcheck unless the band come in. Some do, some don't. I am lucky that most don't and that they leave it to us.

Image: Matthew Baker /Getty Images

"I WATCH EVERY MOVEMENT. PEDALS, WING NUTS, HI-HAT CLUTCH POSITION..."

When the show starts I sit behind the kit, hidden by my flight case. It is important to know the songs so that if I ever need to correct something I can move in without getting in the way.

I watch every movement. Pedals, wing nuts, hi-hat clutch position, anything on the move really. If using a metronome I start and stop it.

Q. What is the one key piece of advice you'd give to any aspiring drum techs?

A. Pay attention, be nice and do not become a serial, insincere networker. You get hired if people like having you around.

Q. The drummer that you are teching for is struck down with a 24-hour illness and you're asked to fill in for that night's sold-out show – what is your immediate response?

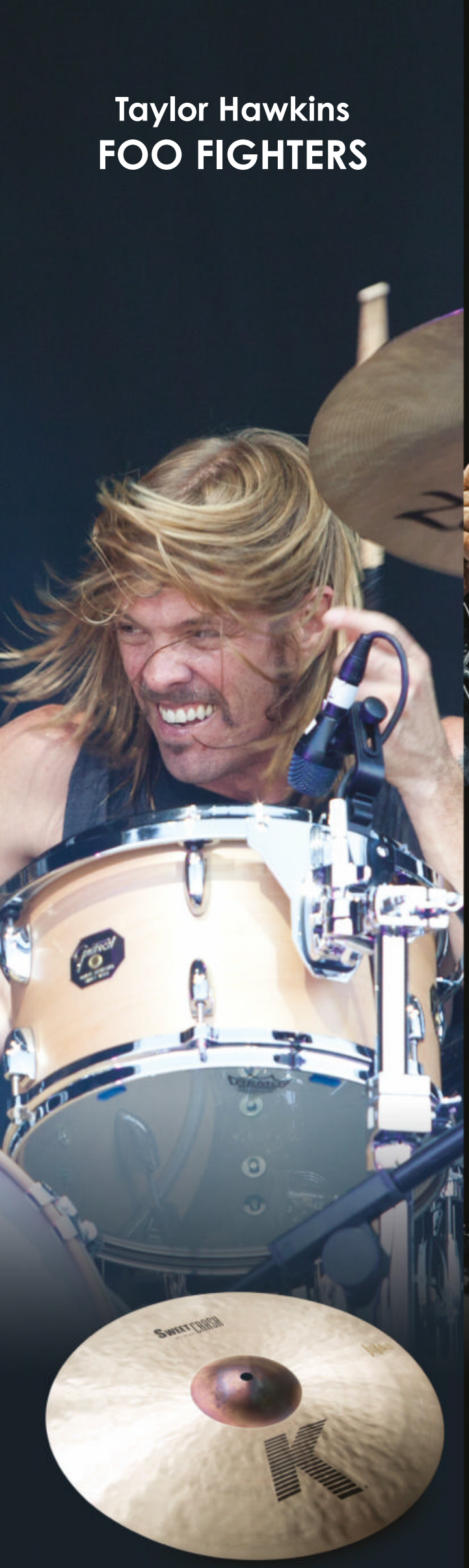
A. It would never happen. I have played with most bands that I have toured with, but only at soundcheck. But then again if the band play Free, Bad Company, Cream, The Who and Thin Lizzy covers then I am your man! RIP Ginger Baker!

Back Yard

Just some of the drummers that Yard has worked with...

Steve Gadd
Vinnie Colaiuta
Zak Starkey
Steve Jordan
Jim Keltner
Jamie Oldaker
Henry Spinetti
Charlie Watts
Ian Thomas
Steve Barney
Ray Cooper
Paulinho da Costa
Omar Hakim
Steve Ferrone
Hawk Lopez
Rich Mercurio
Jodie Linscott
Ash Soan
Danny Cummings
Carlos Hercules

Taylor Hawkins
FOO FIGHTERS



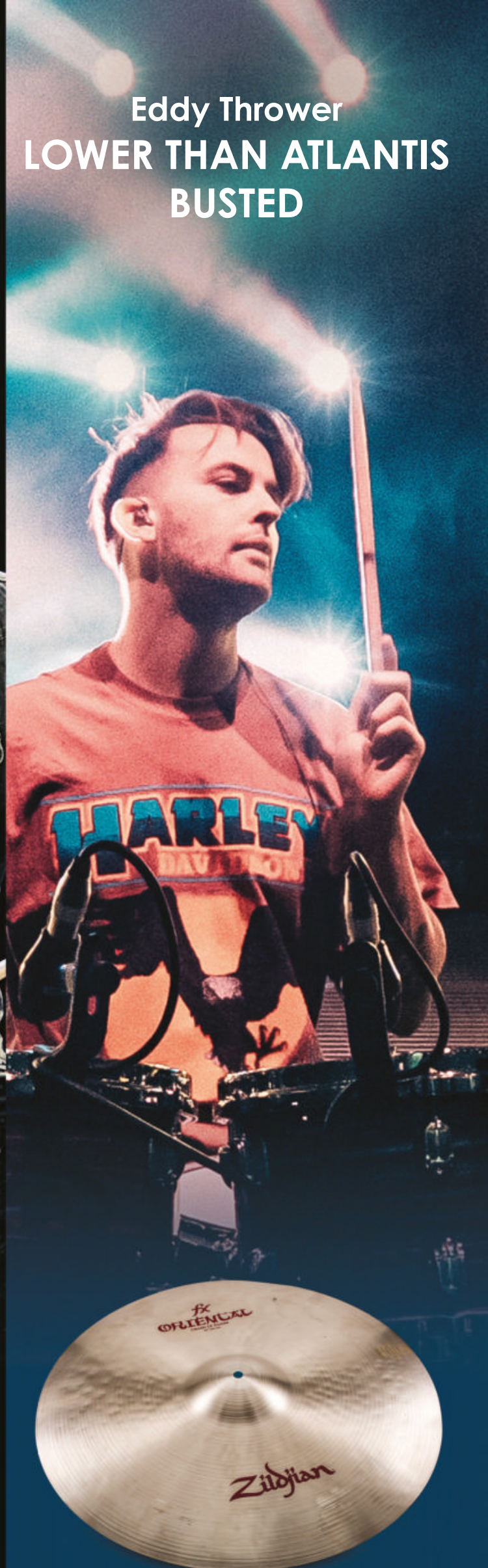
ARTIST CHOICE:
19” K Sweet Crash

Ash Soan
INDEPENDENT

Photo: Francesco Desmaele

ARTIST CHOICE:
14” A Series
New Beat HiHats

Eddy Thrower
LOWER THAN ATLANTIS
BUSTED



ARTIST CHOICE:
22” Oriental
Crash of Doom

©2020 Avedis Zildjian Company

Jack Bevan
FOALS

ARTIST CHOICE:
24” K Light Ride

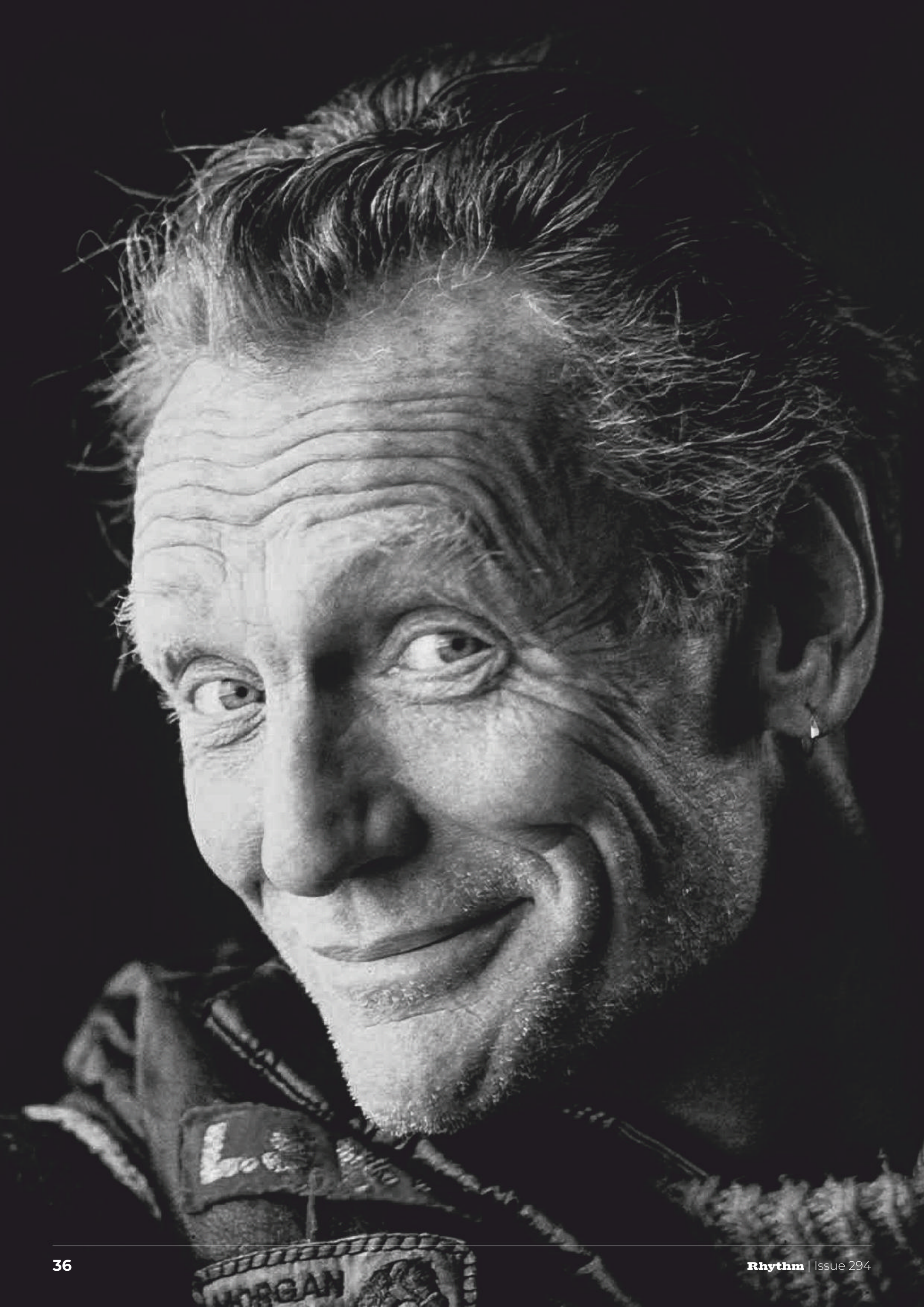
Josh Dun
TWENTY ONE PILOTS

Photo: Real Bear Media

ARTIST CHOICE:
19” A Custom
Medium Crash

Zildjian®

ARTIST’S CHOICE


MORGAN

Ginger Baker

TITAN OF THE DRUMS

Words: **Chris Welch**

Image: **Paul Harris/Getty**

When Ginger Baker crouched behind his set of drums, snatched up the sticks and pounded a thunderous African rhythm on his battery of tom-toms, the world sat up and listened. They watched in awe as the wild-eyed warrior with flaming red hair launched into blitzing solos as hypnotic as they were exciting.

But who was the man who became every drummer's idol? The answer is Peter 'Ginger' Baker was a complex man driven by passion and ruled by ambition. He was also fiercely independent and brave, whether he was racing a car across the Sahara Desert, riding polo ponies or setting up his own recording studio in the heart of Africa.

These were qualities that helped shape a combative approach to life, music and a unique style of playing. No matter what other distractions came along, the drums remained at the core of his being. As Ginger often said: "I just like playing for people – and making them happy."

Even those who didn't like lengthy drum solos or took little notice of the guy at the back of a band were impressed whenever Ginger began to play, whether with Cream, Blind Faith, Air Force or his latter-day Jazz Confusion.

He was a star, critically acclaimed alongside fellow pioneers Mitch Mitchell, John Bonham, Ian Paice and Carl Palmer. More importantly, he would become an inspiration for generations of young percussionists, eager to follow in his footsteps. They would take heed, not just of his technique, but of that unique blend of styles and influences from modern jazz to R&B and African tribal drumming.

It was a heady combination that resulted in the Baker sound and proved such an exotic world music cocktail. How important is his legacy and how does it impact on today's scene? Well, there is still much that can be learned from his example, even in a climate when discipline, order and the mastery of studio recording techniques are valued more perhaps than twenty-minute solos on double bass drum kits. The drama of his life has been well documented. But what really counts is what he gave and can still give to all those eager to pick up the sticks and play. Here's how it all began. ▷

THE JAZZ GENERATION

Peter Baker was born in Lewisham on August 19, 1939 and grew up in New Eltham, South London. His mother, Ruby, worked in a shop but his father, Frederick, a former bricklayer, died in 1943 while serving in the Army in Italy during WWII.

Peter attracted the nickname 'Ginger' thanks to his shock of red hair. An unruly child, nevertheless he passed his exams to attend Grammar school where he got into scrapes with youthful gang members, as he recalled in his autobiography *Hellraiser* (2009). As a teenager, he joined the Air Training Corps and played the trumpet. He also took up cycle racing which built up his strength and stamina.

Rock 'n' roll made an impact in the mid-'50s, but jazz was still highly popular in Britain. Ginger listened avidly to big bands on the radio. "I loved hearing Jack Parnell and Ted Heath. But I was only really interested in their drummers."

Ted Heath featured Ronnie Verrell on drums and the band had a chart hit with their version of 'Skin Deep' in 1954. Another former Heath drummer, Jack Parnell led his own band which included a second drummer, the legendary Phil Seamen. Phil took charge while the leader conducted or sang, and the pair also engaged in exciting drum duets on 'The Champ' and 'Skin Deep'.

When Ginger heard them on the radio he was blown away. He started banging on the kitchen table with knives and forks, playing along to records and driving his mother to distraction. "I drove everybody mad," he laughed. He also played on the school desk cheered on by his classmates. "When the teacher went out I'd start pounding on the hollow desk with my bare hands. I'd still be drumming when he came back and I'd get into big trouble."

He began watching local bands, picking up hints on how to play with sticks and handle a drum kit. "I used to stand there with my eyes glued on the drummer. Then one day I went to a party in Blackheath where a band was playing. All the kids said: 'Go on, Ginger – play the drums!'" He was pushed into the limelight and discovered he really could play. One of the band's horn players said, "We've got a drummer!" It was the first time he'd ever played on a kit.

Aged 15, he formed his own band with a cousin on banjo, John Rangecroft on clarinet and John Finch on trombone. All he could afford was a £3 toy drum kit as he'd spent all his savings on an expensive racing bike. But they did a gig at Bunji's Coffee bar in Soho and earned all of £1.50.

Ginger took a job after leaving school with an advertising agency to raise money for a proper kit. There were plenty of trad jazz bands in London in the late '50s in need of drummers. Baker answered an advertisement in *Melody Maker* and at 16, Ginger joined Bob Wallis & His Storyville Jazzmen. He told Bob that he was only using the toy kit while the 'real' one was being repaired. He also said he'd been playing the drums for three years. It was more like three months.

He quit his day job and spent a year on the road with Bob Wallis armed with a proper kit. He also played with clarinettist Acker Bilk on

Paul Gurvitz and Ginger Baker in the studio with the Baker Gurvitz Army.

Image: Michael Putland/Getty Images

Image: David Redfern/Getty Images

"IT WAS TERRIBLE. HE'D WHACK ME ON THE HAND **WITH A DRUM STICK** IF I MADE A MISTAKE. BUT I DIDN'T GET **THINGS WRONG OFTEN.**"

There's so much to choose from but here are some highlights from his life's work you need to hear...

The Graham Bond Organization
The Sound Of '65 (1965)

A plethora of crisp, clear and concise drumming sparks this inspired set of fusion-rock classics, including a steaming rendition of 'Train Time' and the splendidly gothic track, 'Wade In The Water'. Ginger's solo spot 'Oh Baby' climaxes with astonishingly powerful bass drums. His restless drive behind tunes like 'Got My Mojo Working' and the strangely atmospheric 'Baby Be Good To Me' riveted club audiences.

The Graham Bond Organization
There's A Bond Between Us (1965)

'Camels and Elephants' is Baker's showcase on this storming second Graham Bond Organization album. Ginger whips up the tension on 'Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf' and 'Walkin' In The Park' while displaying an innate swing on 'Dick's Instrumental'. The drum sound achieved on both these Bond albums is actually better than most of Cream's recordings put together.

Cream
Fresh Cream (1966)

Clapton, Baker and Bruce get tough on the album that launched the heavy guitar rock genre. Dazzling performances that include 'Spoonful', 'Cat's Squirrel', 'Rollin' and Tumblin'' and 'I'm So Glad' are propelled by the drummer's unique blend of raucous freedom and structured discipline. Ginger's solo on 'Toad' matches previous epics on the Bond albums, although the all-important bass drum sounds comparatively flat.

a recorded date and later joined Terry Lightfoot's band. The trad jazz men found him competent and energetic but worried about his extrovert behaviour.

Ginger listened to New Orleans pioneers like Baby Dodds and Zutty Singleton, whose snare drum techniques he admired. He also liked the more advanced Sid Catlett who played with both Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker, bridging the gap between Dixieland and bebop. Baker also discovered Max Roach thanks to the 1953 live concert album *The Quintet Of The Year – Jazz At Massey Hall* with Max, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Charles Mingus and Charlie Parker.

Ginger: "I had been listening to Max Roach for years. I was in the school gang and we were all modern jazz fans. They used to steal records, and I was the decoy. *The Quintet Of The Year...* blew me away; so much I actually stole it! I didn't even have a record player. I had to play it at my friend's house. I thought the music was fantastic and that was way before I played the drums."

Another major influence closer to home was Phil Seamen, undoubtedly Britain's finest modern jazz drummer. As soon as Ginger heard him play on the radio and then live with Tubby Hayes and Ronnie Scott, he was smitten with his technique, style and uncompromising personality.

> I USED TO STAND THERE WITH **MY EYES GLUED ON THE DRUMMER.** THEN ONE DAY I WENT **TO A PARTY...** WHERE A BAND WAS PLAYING. ALL THE KIDS SAID: **'GO ON, GINGER – PLAY THE DRUMS!'**

Back on the trad jazz scene, Terry Lightfoot had begun to complain about Baker's increasingly "bebop drumming". He demanded that Ginger stick to a steady four to the bar on the bass drum and not "drop bombs" like Max Roach that upset the band. His drummer's answer was short and left no room for discussion. Ginger said: "Every time I put in a bass drum off the beat, Terry nearly swallowed his clarinet."

Having lost his job, Ginger went off to Denmark with beatnik guitarist Diz Disley. A punch-up at a party led to a rapid parting of ways. The drummer toured Scandinavia with gospel singer Sister Rosetta Tharpe but was unemployed on his return to England. The wanderer got a labouring job at Woolwich Arsenal and studied drum parts by night, learning to read music.

He left home and began hanging out in Soho's Archer Street. In the late '50s, this was where professional musicians gathered to exchange information and gain employment. The strategy paid off when he landed a gig with Ken Oldham's band at the Galtymore Irish ballroom in Cricklewood. They played tunes by Stan Kenton like 'Artistry In Rhythm' as well as Irish jigs. Ginger could read exercises and knew the value of notes but could not figure out why he was getting to the

Image: Anwar Hussein/Getty Images

Ginger with Jack Bruce and Cream.

Ron Pownall

Image: Ron Pownall/Getty mages

end of an arrangement before the rest of the band: "That was because I didn't understand a repeat sign."

After a three-week trial, he stayed with the band for a year and enjoyed the experience. "It was great. I could go to the hall and practise rudiments and reading all day before the evening gig. That's where I learned the drum parts." He even studied harmony and tried writing his own arrangement of the tune 'Surrey With A Fringe On Top' for the 16-piece orchestra. "I always thought you had to be a complete musician and not just a drummer."

Ginger moved on to play with the Les Douglas Orchestra in Glasgow and Germany but came home penniless. Back in London, he frequented Soho's jazz clubs seeking work. By the early '60s, Ginger had come under the spell of Art Blakey with the Jazz Messengers and Elvin Jones with John Coltrane. Ginger said, "I heard Elvin play with Coltrane in London in 1961 and he was just amazing."

However, the modern jazz fraternity regarded Ginger with suspicion. He was loud but exciting. Even so, word spread when tenor saxophonist Tubby Hayes heard him playing an All-Nighter show at the Flamingo Club in Wardour Street. He told his friend Phil Seaman he should get down and see him.

Phil went up to Ginger and said: "Here, I want a word with you." Phil was Ginger's hero, and the latter couldn't believe his luck.

"When Phil said he wanted to talk to me, I felt 10 feet tall. He was God to me. I had been listening to him since I was a kid."

They retired to Seamen's nearby flat and played records by African drummers. It would be a turning point in Baker's life. Phil opened Ginger's ears to a fuller understanding of rhythm and timekeeping. He also gave him lessons in rudiments and technique, and the pair practised together. They became firm friends even if the lessons were sometimes arduous.

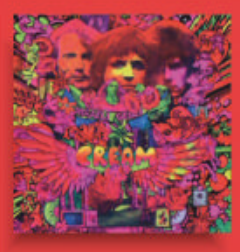
Ginger: "It was terrible. He'd whack me on the hand with a drum stick if I made a mistake. But I didn't get things wrong often. Phil turned me on to African drumming which had an enormous effect on my playing."

Meanwhile, Ginger was unhappy with his first 'real' kit and set about making his own from clear plastic Perspex. "I bent the shells and shaped them over a gas ring used for cooking. I cut them all out and pieced them together with metal drum fittings." The basic kit comprised an 11" bass drum shell, and 7" and 13" tom-tom shells. He used it until 1966 when he bought his first Ludwig kit.

GINGER'S ELECTRIC BLUES

By now Baker had absorbed and combined the key jazz and African influences that would shape his unique style of drumming. But the arrival of R&B also emphasised the need for a solid backbeat. Muddy Waters' Chicago-style electric blues and Chuck Berry's hit records inspired a new movement on the British scene. Soon bands led by Alexis Korner, Cyril Davies and John Mayall plus The Rolling Stones began packing out R&B clubs once devoted to trad jazz.

Cream
Disraeli Gears (1967)



Baker is less omnipresent on this second Cream album, which was recorded in New York during the band's first American visit. Featuring long improvisations and an overload of eccentric, non-bluesy material, it was labelled 'psychedelic' at the time by the music press. But the album does contain 'Strange Brew' and 'Sunshine Of Your Love', the bass 'n' guitar riff distinguished by Ginger's unusual Apache-style tom-tom intro.

Cream
Wheels Of Fire (1968)

Clapton and Bruce are heavily featured but Ginger's drums add shape and character to this LP's wide-ranging material. His improvisational style is apparent on the live tracks and where his brushes steam behind the harmonica on the six-minute-long 'Traintime'. A 15-minute 'Toad' contains most of Ginger's trademark licks, including the sizzling cymbal roll build-up towards a Niagara of double bass drum and tom-tom triplets.

Blind Faith
Blind Faith (1969)

Eric Clapton and Steve Winwood teamed up with Ginger to create a pleasant set of more laid-back and melodic performances like 'Presence Of The Lord' and 'Can't Find My Way Home'. More sophisticated and less intense than Cream, Ginger was able to express his unique solo style on his own 'Do What You Like'. Curiously, he plays patterns on the bells of his cymbals to a hi-hat beat, a device that recalls Bonham's interlude on 'Whole Lotta Love'. Great minds obviously think alike.

TRIBUTES TO GINGER

A generation of drummers were inspired by Ginger Baker...

ABASS DODOO

"In 2007 I was living and working in London when I received a phone call out of the blue from Tina (Clarke) at Zildjian, asking if I would like to do a gig with Ginger Baker and Tony Allen. I immediately said yes, because my uncle – JC Commodore – had told me a lot about Ginger when I was growing up in Ghana and I really wanted to meet him.

"Ginger became my teacher and my best friend, and I feel so lucky, proud and blessed that I got to work with him and get to know him as well as I did. We had a lot of fun together over the years. From the start we had the most amazing energy on stage – it really felt good – and I learnt so much from him. Never before have I had such freedom playing live; Ginger gave me the space to be myself and taught me about improvisation. Ours was a very natural musical connection and, apart from the beginning and the end, very little of what we played was planned – it just happened! Some of the rhythms we played were very similar – sometimes what Ginger was doing would take me back to the rhythms that my grandparents had taught me in Ghana – and, because of that familiarity, I instinctively knew what to put in there to make it sound great. It was the same for Ginger when I played, and those musical conversations gave us both a huge amount of enjoyment. Every time I go behind my drums now, I feel like something is missing... RIP Ginger – I miss you and will remember you always."

There was no problem about being 'loud' in an amplified band and so Ginger joined Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated in August 1962, taking over the drums stool from an obliging Charlie Watts.

The first time I saw Ginger in action was at the Richmond Jazz Festival on August 11, 1963, when he was playing an afternoon session with Alexis Korner in a hot, airless sports club. I stood as close to the kit as possible. The audience was fascinated as we watched Ginger attacking his drums with tremendous speed and violence, hair and limbs flying. And this wasn't just about keeping time. Ginger's playing was all part of the musical experience, as important as the riffs from the guitarist and the wail of the harmonica.

Blues Incorporated later evolved to include alto saxophonist Graham Bond and bass guitarist Jack Bruce. Both of them and Ginger Baker left to form the breakaway Graham Bond Trio. Guitarist John McLaughlin played with them before Dick Heckstall-Smith was added on tenor saxophone and the Graham Bond Organization was born. Their joint efforts marked the birth of jazz rock.

On joining *Melody Maker* in October 1964, I suggested we should interview Ginger for a special feature. Editor Jack Hutton agreed. Ginger was making waves and the *Melody Maker* was keen to find out more about this rising star. Charlie Watts of the chart-topping Rolling Stones was always raving about him, so that was an added incentive.

The *Melody Maker* story which ran in 1965 was headlined: "Ginger Baker, one of Britain's Great drummers tells us: 'I Know I'm A Bit of a Monster.'"

"They call him the Thunder Machine. But Ginger Baker is no machine. He is an emotional 25-year-old who plays drums the way he feels they ought to be played. Despite criticism, he has become the idol of Britain's beat drummers and still earned the respect of such jazzmen as Phil Seamen. More than a select few are beginning to realise he is one of the great drummers."

Ginger told how he used to freelance at Ronnie Scott's club when most drummers sat stiffly in collars and ties and played in suitably polite nightclub fashion.

"I was rather controversial. I was always 'too loud!' But I don't like these guys that play like a metronome. I know I'm a bit of a monster. I have always been big-headed but people whose playing I liked, always liked mine and that kept me going. Ronnie changed his policy and I lost any work I ever had. After a while, I joined Alexis Korner, mainly through a nice gesture by Charlie Watts who left the band so that I could join. He had been a fan of mine since 1959 and is a nice guy and a very good player. Since then I've had the best time ever and Alexis helped me become a non-monster."

Ginger revealed that on joining Graham Bond he found the going very hard but it paid off. "I'm really enjoying myself. We've had our rows but the music always holds us together."

Early live quartet recordings of the band from a 1963 session at Klooks Kleek, a club in West Hampstead, showed him playing in a busy, Elvin Jones-inspired style.

Released on the 1970 Warner Brothers double album *Solid Bond,* Ginger could be heard keeping time on ride cymbals and breaking up the beat with flurries of snare drum assaults. On later studio recordings with the Organization his playing had become more disciplined.

One of the most exhilarating aspects of Ginger's drumming was his ability to ▷

Image: Heritage Images/Getty Images

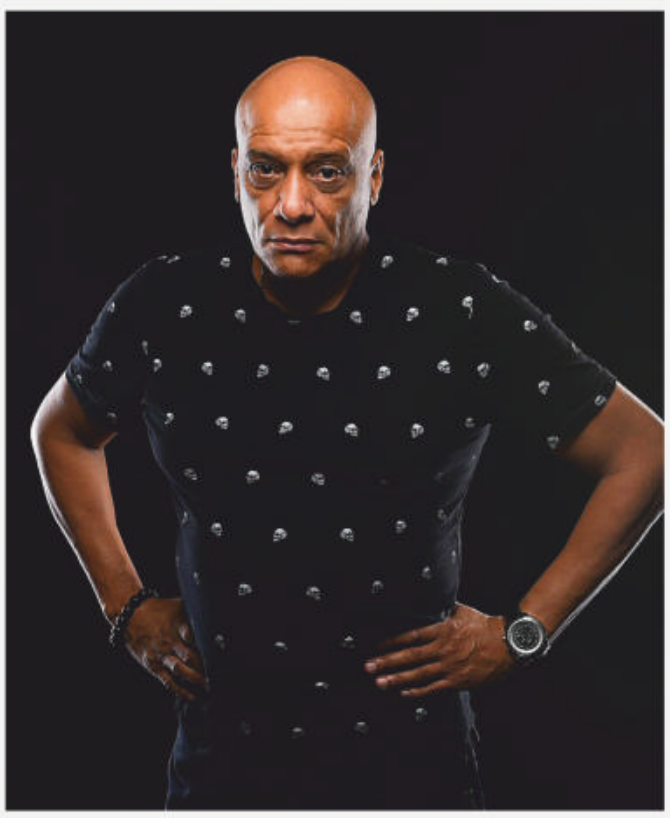
ALEC DANKWORTH

"Ginger was a very musical and melodic drummer, and it was always great to work with him. I actually played clarinet before taking up the bass, so I applied that melodic approach to my bass playing in the same way that Ginger did on the drums... He used the toms more than his cymbals to express that melodic side – and his musicality – and, for me, that made him unique and really set him apart from other drummers of that era.

"With Jazz Confusion – also featuring Abass Dodoo and Pee Wee Ellis – Ginger was happy to let anything happen. He was totally at home in that jazz setting and we were all 'open-eared' in terms of how we played together and allowed something different to happen every time. It really was a pleasure to be involved in that group and when we were on tour – even though the venues were not quite Madison Square Garden! – the people that came to see Ginger play in those clubs really appreciated the intimate setting. The enthusiasm for him as a legendary drummer was there wherever we went, and it was wonderful to see him playing so amazingly well and thoroughly enjoying himself. One thing that did surprise me though, is that he never wanted to do a drum solo!"

Ginger and percussionist Abass Dodoo in action.

Image: Brian Rasic/Getty Images



MEL GAYNOR

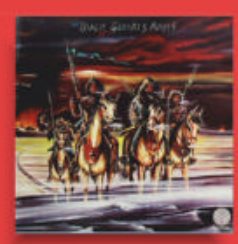
"I came across Ginger when I was about 17 and it was his whole approach to rock drumming – spontaneous and totally different to the way everybody else was playing at that time – that was so inspiring. By essentially playing jazz in that rock situation, he completely threw the rule book out of the window... The way he rolled around the tom-toms was iconic, his big breaks were phenomenal, and he taught me so much about independence, and independence in the groove. He was a huge influence and I still take so much from him today.

"One of my favourite Ginger moments is 'Sunshine Of Your Love'. The way he breaks out of the rhythm to go into the chorus is just incredible, and then the double bass comes in at the outro... As a drummer, what he does on that track still freaks me out!"

Ginger Baker's Air Force
Ginger Baker's Air Force (1970)

Ginger set up the group Air Force with an abundance of fine musicians, including his drumming hero and former instructor, Phil Seamen. The pair are heard in a fascinating drum duel which highlights, in a very succinct and organic way, how the pupil and mentor influenced each other's playing. Phil Seamen is the more fluid and melodic of the pair, while Ginger has the edge in terms of power and concept. This remains an exhilarating foray into uncharted drum territory.

Baker Gurvitz Army
Baker Gurvitz Army (1974)



Baker made a confident comeback with this power rock format. Fronted by guitarist Adrian Gurvitz, Ginger responds to changing times by playing a more consistent backbeat. A fashionable choked hi-hat is used on a soulful 'Love Is', and Ginger's 'Memory Lane' solo has all his old fire. The idiosyncratic narrative 'Mad Jack' is boosted by Ginger's sports car burning rubber and '4 Phil' is a heartfelt blues tribute to Phil Seamen.

Ginger Baker Trio
Falling Off The Roof (1996)

Ginger recorded extensively in different settings during the intervening years, but this mid-'90s album exemplifies his return to full-time jazz. Working with guitarist Bill Frisell and famed bass player Charlie Haden, Ginger can swing more loosely and interact in a way that recalls the heyday of the Graham Bond Trio. The title track, Monk's 'Bemsha Swing' and Parker's 'Au Privave' are among the highlights.

Ginger Baker & The DJQ20
Coward Of The County (1999)

Regarded by the drummer as his best-ever album, Ginger plays with notable sensitivity, achieving a warm and uncluttered sound that complements Ron Miles (trumpet), Fred Hess (tenor) and guest star James Carter (bass clarinet and baritone sax). These US musicians inspire him to play in his most fruitful fashion. Ginger harks back to his roots with a tune dedicated to the late Cyril Davies.

Cream
Royal Albert Hall London May 2-3-5-6, 2005 (2005)

A right royal return and as it turned out, an emotional send-off for Cream, the supergroup Ginger had formed with Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce back in 1966. Audiences cheered at these historic reunion concerts when the drummer launched into old favourites 'I'm So Glad', 'Spoonful' and a tear-away 'Rollin' and Tumblin'' displaying all aspects of his drive and creativity. 'Toad' is brought back to life amidst a thunder of bass drums and a roar of cymbals, and 'Sunshine Of Your Love' shines one more time.

Ginger Baker
Why? (2014)

African and jazz rhythms flourish on the leader's final album. Wailing saxophone from Pee Wee Ellis stands out on 'Ginger Spice' along with Alec Dankworth's nimble bass. Ginger's drumming partner Abass Dodoo adds spirited percussion while all four musicians combine improvisation on a swinging '12+ More Blues' and an even bluesier 'Cyril Davis'. Ginger drums up a storm on 'St. Thomas' and 'Aiko Biaye' before the grand finale 'Why?' the old Graham Bond favourite 'Wade In The Water' revisited. And why not?

orchestrate a roar of climactic rolls on the snare drum, tom-toms and double bass drums. How did he do it?

"I can play as fast with the right foot as I can with my right hand," he explained. "To get four different things going at once, you have got to remove a mental barrier... get the left hand going and forget about it. Independence is about splitting the brain into four." He demonstrated this idea by drumming with his hands on a tabletop and with a box of matches.

After that first meeting, Ginger was always willing to chat and remained friendly and cheerful over the years, despite the occasional warning grumble. Often he'd be laughing while playing, satisfied when he was working with the musicians he most admired.

The Bond Organization was managed by Robert Stigwood who asked me to write sleeve notes for the debut Graham Bond album *The Sound Of '65*. The LP was adorned with a bright red cover painting by Ginger, in the style of Jackson Pollock. Ginger's drums were crystal clear on that first Graham Bond album when he energised dynamic arrangements like 'Hoochie Coochie Man', 'Spanish Blues' and 'Wade In The Water'. Ginger's backing had an urgency and authority that pushed along the soloists and he underscored the ensemble passages with clipped precision.

WAR OF THE PEDALS

His big band style playing on instrumental number 'Wade In The Water' greatly impressed Bill Bruford, the Yes drummer who wrote a letter of praise to the *Melody Maker*. Indeed, Ginger was inspiring a whole a new generation of drummers. John Bonham of Led Zeppelin was a fan and every beat group in the country began giving space for drummers to show off their skills. Ginger had joined the ranks of Keith Moon and Mitch Mitchell, each with their own distinctive style and personality.

The Sound of '65 would take some beating and not even John Bonham would achieve the same sharp, crisp effect on the early Led Zeppelin albums.

Ginger's drumming next fired up *There's A Bond Between Us* (1965) that included an extended solo on 'Camels and Elephants'. The hard-hitting bass and snare drum attack typified his percussive aggression. Ginger: "I had been playing solos since I started. People wanted me to because it was always a crowd-pleaser. It went down well on every gig I ever did. Everyone went barmy!"

Ginger's gear wasn't always up to the job and he suffered from broken bass drum pedals. Leather straps would snap, usually at the most inconvenient moment. It happened on stage just before his big solo at the Gaumont, Lewisham in 1965 when the Organization were supporting headline act Chuck Berry.

Emitting a loud oath he snatched up the offending pedal and smashed it to bits on the floor. Ginger's frustration helped drum manufacturers get their act together and produce more resilient hardware. While Ginger never much liked hard rock and heavy metal there's no doubt he paved the way for all the powerhouse players to come from Nicko McBrain to Lars Ulrich.

As Ginger said: "I often had problems breaking pedals. They had leather straps that used to snap. But I had piles of spares. I don't know how I developed my power or style but I guess it came from listening

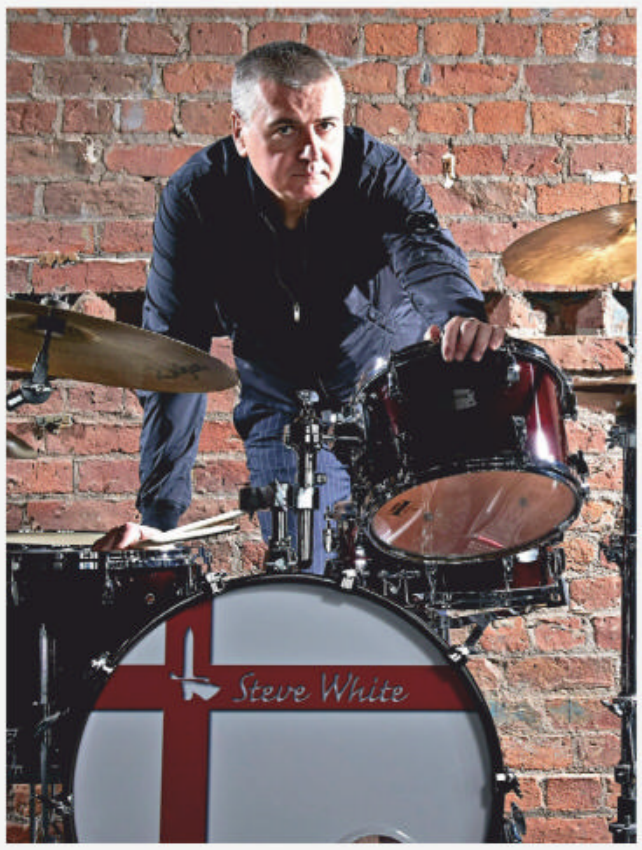
TRIBUTES TO GINGER

STEVE WHITE

"What makes Ginger Baker a drum icon? His personality, his uniqueness, his passion as a musician and his ability to end a set with a drum solo, as I witnessed at the Albert Hall on 5th May 2005 at Cream's reunion show.

"Ginger was a jazz drummer in a rock world and, when I first heard him play, I was knocked out... There were shades of Elvin, a love of African music and hints of the blues – what a combination! It was his swing, his individuality and his musicianship that made him so special, and an inspiration to a whole new generation of drummers. Guys like Ginger were just a different breed.

"As I spoke about in the last issue of Rhythm, it was Ginger who inspired me to try jazz-influenced grooves in my own playing and 'Sunflower' owes a lot to him. Cream's *Disraeli Gears* is fab, but I also love the Ginger Baker's Air Force live album. The solo on 'Toad' is incredible and I think that's because Phil Seamen was in the band. It's the master showing his master respect..."



The return of Cream at The Royal Albert Hall, May 2005.

Image: Brian Rasic/Getty Images

to guys like Max Roach, Louie Bellson and Phil Seamen. Sid Catlett played a big part as did Elvin Jones and Art Blakey."

Although the Graham Bond Organization was popular in the clubs, they couldn't get a hit record. In July 1966 Ginger telephoned the *Melody Maker* with the news that he'd left Bond (he was replaced by Jon Hiseman) and was forming a group with himself, Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce. The story was confirmed by manager Robert Stigwood the following week and I was invited to see the group now called Cream rehearsing at a church hall in North London in July 1966. They were readying for their debut at the UK's Sixth National Jazz & Blues Festival.

SWEET AND SOUR ROCK 'N' ROLL

Eric had come to fame with The Yardbirds and John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and now wanted to lead his own blues trio. He'd encountered Ginger when the drummer jammed with the Bluesbreakers one night and that's when Baker first suggested the idea of forming a band together. Eric agreed but insisted they have Jack Bruce on bass guitar and vocals. This was a problem as Baker and Bruce had a history of clashing on stage, usually when Ginger thought the bassist was interrupting his drum solos. But agreeing that Jack was a fine musician, he gave way to Eric's wishes.

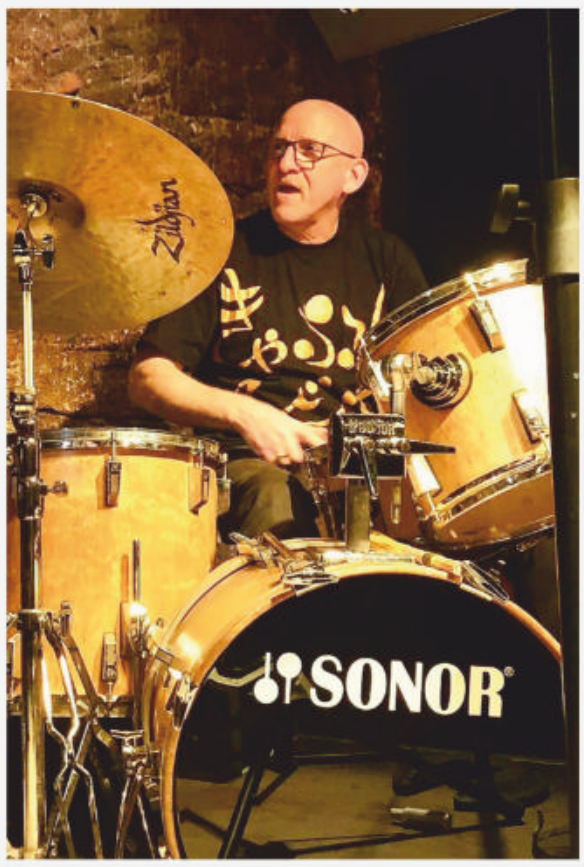
Eric was nervous about the prospect of working in the new project and insisted that Cream was definitely *not* going to be a jazz group. He optimistically called their music 'sweet and sour rock 'n' roll'. However, Ginger and Jack had other ideas. Even so, with poet Pete Brown co-writing the lyrics, at Ginger's behest, and Eric, Jack and even Ginger occasionally singing, a strange musical brew would emerge that somehow fitted into the '60s pop scene.

The first Cream rehearsal took place in Ginger's house when they played 'Cat Squirrel' and 'Hey Lawdy Mama'. "As soon as we played it was total magic," he recalled. I was then invited to see another rehearsal in the church hall in front of an audience of Brownies and a caretaker sweeping the floor. The boys stood around ▷

ADAM NUSSBAUM

"I was around 12 years old when I first started hearing the invasion of music that was coming from the UK at that time. There were so many great British drummers and they all played differently... What I loved about guys like Ginger in particular, is that they weren't just laying down a groove... They were keeping time, but they were also an interactive part of the ensemble. That really opened the door for me in regards to what was happening within jazz improvisation – where you are contributing to the musical conversation and are truly part of the experience. The fact that Cream's rhythm section worked with that jazz attitude and approach was a huge inspiration, and Ginger became one of my biggest heroes...

"With Ginger, there was always momentum and forward motion – he didn't play things in a conventional way, and I liked that. Things have got to be visceral and that primal element of his playing really made you feel something; it hit you firmly in the gut. Nobody played it safe in Cream – everybody was reaching and, like any great band, it was the combination of



those elements that made it so special. The sum is always greater than the parts, and I was captivated by that unique combination and that sense of adventure. They all had great sound on so many different levels and – even though I appreciate that the template has changed now – they showed that there is no substitute for hearing real time and real people finding a groove together. Things that have a profound effect on you take time and effort, and it's hard for youngsters to understand that today because they are growing up in a digital world. There are no shortcuts and you can't learn experience – it can only come from watching, listening and paying attention. Today we stand on the shoulders of the people who gave us inspiration. Certain people, like Ginger, gave us the foundation and now we have to continue working on the building...

"I was lucky enough to be on the same bill as Ginger at the Modern Drummer Festival in 1993, along with Louie Bellson, Dennis Chambers and Terry Bozzio. Ginger was in a great mood, extremely respectful of the elders, and it was so great to be able to say thank you and tell him that he was one of my guys..."

in a sea of cigarette ends and prepared to run through a few numbers for me. Ginger, sporting a villainous-looking beard, crouched over his drum stool set in its lowest possible position and a ride cymbal sloping upwards. Wielding a pair of enormous sticks he told me: "Phil Seamen calls 'em Irish navvy poles". He suggested the band play their latest 'comedy number'. This proved to be a jug band tune called 'Take Your Finger Off It'.

Their worried manager whispered in my ear, "Are they any good?" I assured Robert they were great. I later saw them play at Klooks Kleek, a pub gig in West Hampstead and at the Marquee. It was more enjoyable than seeing them at the Windsor jazz festival on July 31st, 1966, when it poured with rain. Their best shows, however, were at the Saville Theatre in London with The Beatles in the audience.

Then came the albums *Fresh Cream* (1966) and *Disraeli Gears* (1967) and hit songs like 'White Room', 'Tales of Brave Ulysses' and 'Sunshine of Your Love', the classic rock anthem when the drummer set up his trademark Apache-style rhythm. The trio were a huge success when they toured America in 1967.

DRUM SOLOS & BATTLING WITH GIANTS

When Ginger played 'Toad' in the States it caused a sensation. It had evolved from those previous showcase numbers 'Oh Baby' and 'Camels And Elephants' honed during club gigs back home when Graham Bond introduced him as "Europe's greatest drummer". These solos usually commenced with the snare drum, tuned high with the wire snares in the 'off' position and the tom-toms tuned low. He'd set up a Latin-style rhythm leading through various patterns before unleashing the bass drum barrage.

In the Cream era, 'Toad' could run for

Image: Ron Pownall/Getty Images

TRIBUTES TO GINGER

KEITH CARLOCK

"A jazz improvisational spirit mixed in with a rock attitude – that's how I hear Ginger's playing, and it's been a big inspiration for me. He was one of the first drummers to put that together, and it's how the whole fusion thing happened. Ginger changed drumming forever – he was a true pioneer – and those guys were creating something, putting something together, that just hadn't been done before. 'White Room' is a classic tune with such a variety of vibes, and no-one could have played it better."

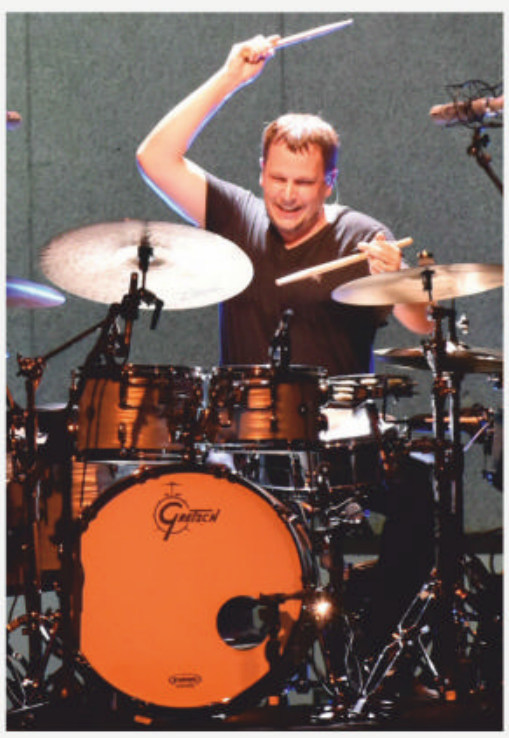


Image: Chris McKay/Getty Images

SIMON PHILLIPS

"When I was a kid I wasn't really into rock – it was more big bands and jazz for me – and it wasn't until later that I discovered Ginger Baker and Cream. Ginger had a very individual style of drumming and – like so many guys from that era – a lovely feel and a very special touch and sound. He played the kit as one instrument, like you would a trombone, and not as a collection of different parts, which is something that I am passionate about myself.

"Along with Buddy Rich in America, Ginger was instrumental in bringing the drummer to the public, and drumming to the forefront. 'White Room' is one of my favourite Cream songs – it's a little more orchestral in its approach, and I love the way that Ginger plays on it."

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15 minutes or more. Performed on an expanded garishly painted Ludwig kit, it was structured to include a sizzling Zildjian cymbals interlude followed by more snare drum improvisation. The maestro then launched into a climactic finale, feet pedalling furiously on the double bass drums, and hands setting up an insistent triplet pattern on the echoing tom-toms.

The extra bass drum was added in 1966 after Ginger saw American drummer Sam Woodyard using them at a Duke Ellington Orchestra concert. Ginger: "Sam played some incredible tom-tom and two bass drum things and I just knew I had to get a two bass drum kit."

The first studio 'Toad' appeared on the 1966 *Fresh Cream* album. Another live version provided a finale to the double LP *Wheels Of Fire* (1968). Despite its international success, Cream was beset by dissent. Lyricist Pete Brown and Jack Bruce wrote the band's biggest hits and this caused Ginger grief when it came to apportioning royalties. He'd complain: "I put the band together but I got the least out of it! I did things like the 5/4 bolero rhythm at the beginning of 'White Room'. I'm not saying I wrote the whole song but if they'd given me 5 per cent I'd have been happy!

"Same as 'Sunshine Of Your Love'. Maybe just a little bit to say thank you for your contribution. It started out very fast and I said 'C'mon, let's slow it down'. So we slowed it down and I played the backwards drum beat, which not many drummers can play although lots have tried. Even so, every gig was a big event. We'd walk on stage to a standing ovation before we'd even played a note. We'd get this enormous wave of adulation".

Ginger's close friend, Charlie Watts, presented him with the Zildjian Drummers Achievement Award at a star-studded event in London in December 2008.

Image: Brian Rasic/Getty Images

"I HAD BEEN PLAYING **SOLOS** SINCE I STARTED... IT **WENT DOWN WELL** ON EVERY GIG I EVER DID. EVERYONE WENT **BARMY!**"

When Cream split in 1968, Ginger's solo at the Royal Albert Hall, London was a highlight of their farewell performance. He showed his skills again in Blind Faith, alongside Eric Clapton, Steve Winwood and Rick Grech. When they performed at a free concert in Hyde Park in 1969, Ginger woke up a lethargic crowd with 'Do What You Like'. But the new supergroup didn't last and he set about forming Ginger Baker's Air Force in 1970.

An ambitious project, the line-up drew upon Graham Bond, Steve Winwood and Denny Laine. Most interestingly, it boasted three drummers, notably Ginger's mentor Phil Seamen and Alan White who had played with John and Yoko and went on to fame with prog rockers Yes. Alan remembered Air Force as a mystifying experience, especially when Phil Seamen hid his drums sticks just before a performance. The band lost a lot of money but had fun during its brief lifespan. It split up after a cancelled US tour.

Ginger had more fun engaging in a historic drum battle with one of his idols, Elvin Jones. The pair met on stage at London's Lyceum Ballroom in February

TRIBUTES TO GINGER

STEVE SMITH

"When I was a young drummer in the '60s, I loved jazz and jazz drummers. It wasn't until I heard Ginger Baker – and Mitch Mitchell – that I really started to get into rock. For me, Ginger sounded like a rock version of Elvin Jones and Art Blakey, or an African djembe player who took up the drum kit... He plays with such deep-rooted, organic feel and was playing polyrhythmic rock before most people had ever heard of the word! Cheers Ginger, you will always be one of the masters."

BILL BRUFORD

"Peter 'Ginger' Baker got me into drumming... I loved *The Sound Of '65* by The Graham Bond Organization, and Ginger's drumming on tracks like 'Wade In The Water' was absolutely fantastic. I remember writing a fan letter to *Melody Maker* just about that track. So, I hold Ginger responsible for my obsession with drums, and for totally ruining my life!"

BILLY WARD

"The first thing I noticed about Ginger Baker was his even and controlled touch – almost jazzy. 'Sunshine Of Your Love' was the first time I realised that he – almost automatically – had a swinging thing happening and, to this day, when I hear or play eighth notes with a slight swing, I think of him. I always loved his sizzle cymbals, no doubt stemming from his jazzy years, plus his playing on the Blind Faith record is brilliant."

Images: James Cumpsty

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TM-6 PRO trigger module... smart, simple and discreet, the TM-6 PRO gives you instant and reliable access to every drum sound in the book, on every stage you play.

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Jacopo Volpe hybrid setup / Vanilla Sky Tour / 2018

Roland

GINGER'S SET-UPS

Our expert Geoff Nicholls takes you through the gear that defined the sounds of Ginger Baker's incredible career...

As a teenager, Ginger swapped from racing bikes to drums after seeing his beloved bike pummelled irretrievably under a London taxi. He cobbled together a 'bitsa' kit from legendary drum dealer and renovator Vic O'Brien. Other early pictures show him playing an English Ajax set, unsurprisingly since his mentor Phil Seamen was an Ajax endorsee.

Ever resourceful and determined, Ginger then built his own kit. He obtained sheets of dark green Perspex, heated them over his gas stove and bent them into shells, before drilling and assembling the lot with his Vic O'Brien hardware! Extraordinarily, this was several years before the American company Zickos launched the world's first commercial Plexiglas kits, and it remains a mystery as to what gave him the idea.

Still Ginger hankered after an American kit and he'd set his sights on Ludwig after a chance encounter with founder William F Ludwig Sr at London's Drum City in 1961.

"Phil and I used to go there and play", he once told this writer, "and one day we arrived to find this grey-haired old bloke sitting on a bass drum in his underpants sewing up a tear in his trousers. He sat there and boogied while Phil and I played duets. He was such a cool geezer I decided that if I ever could afford a new kit it would be Ludwig."

Accordingly, just prior to Cream, Ginger got his first Ludwig, a small jazzy Downbeat (20"x12", 12"x8", 14"x14") in the rare Galaxy (black sparkle) wrap. By this time he'd also obtained a '40s American Leedy Broadway wood snare from Alton Redd, the drummer in visiting trombonist Kid Ory's New Orleans jazz band. The drum was white, but Ginger later covered it in black to match the Galaxy, and he played it on-and-off throughout his career.

1

Image: Stanley Bielecki/ASP/Getty Images

AT THE DOUBLE

On the formation of Cream (1966), Ginger went all out with his first double bass kit. Alas, he informed Keith Moon of his plans, prompting him to join two Premier kits together, thereby usurping Ginger who got his Ludwigs specially made by Ludwig. Interestingly his main (right) bass drum was 20"x11", while his left one was 22"x11".

As with his Downbeat, the mounts for his 12"x8" and 13"x9" toms were Rogers Swiv-o-matics. Floor toms were 14"x14" and 16"x14".

Unlike most Ludwig players who used Speed King pedals, Ginger favoured Ludwig's Fleetfoot pedals with leather drive straps for a slinkier feel. He set his top toms horizontally and played rim shots off them, battling against the increasing volume of Jack and Eric, in the days before individual miking. Plastic heads were also a significant benefit. "A great invention", Ginger asserted.

For cymbals, Ginger was a lifelong

3

Zildjian devotee. Although he played aggressively his refined technique meant he rarely broke a cymbal. Indeed, a couple of cymbals he picked out at Zildjian's US HQ in 1966 he played right through to the end.

MORE VOLUME

As Cream got louder, Ginger got a second double Ludwig, this time with standard 20"x14" and 22"x14" bass drums. It also had newly improved Ludwig tom fittings. The wood Leedy gave way to a metal Ludwig Super Sensitive. He also devised a way to double-tier his expanding Zildjian cymbal armoury in the days before multi-clamps and adaptable mounting hardware.

Following the demise of Cream, Ginger played this kit in his Air Force, now adorned with Air Force stickers and the names of band members. Things came full circle when Ludwig introduced its Plexiglas Vistalite range and Ginger appeared in jovial mid-'70s ads proudly fronting his Amber-Yellow Spiral (pattern C) beauty.

MOVING ON

During decades in semi-retirement on various continents, Ginger played many Ludwigs. But during his '90s Colorado sojourn, appearing at the Iridium club in New York with DJ (Denver Jazz) Q20, he requested a Ludwig kit which failed to materialise. Drum Workshop stepped in and Ginger became a DW artist.

Memorably, he appeared at the Royal Albert Hall in 2005 for the Cream reunion concerts with a DW Collector's Series set in Emerald Stain Oil with brass hardware. Yard Gavrilovic (see p.32) teched for Ginger and told Rhythm, "His bass drums are 20"x12" (main) and 22"x12" (left). His snare is a 13"x5½" DW Craviotto. He also still has the 14"x6½" Leedy that he used in Cream. It's taken a fair old hammering. Toms are 10"x8", 12"x9" mounted and 13"x10" and 14"x12" floors.

"He uses two DW 5000 kick pedals and

2

Image: Ron Howard/Getty Images

Image: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

Image: Michael Putland/Getty Images

a legless hi-hat clamped to the bass drum hoop. The bass drums have full front heads, damping is a DW pillow just touching both heads. He wants them to 'sing'.

"For tuning, he taught me this technique where he works his way up from the floor tom and taps the snare drum with the snares off so the drums are all in tune with each other. The snare is fairly low, a fat sound. Resonant tom heads are a quarter turn higher than the tops. His main thing is the snare. He'll say, "I don't really care how often you change the toms as long as you leave the snare alone.

"Cymbals are Zildjian, some of which date back to Cream, including his 14" hi-hats and 22" K ride with 12 rivets. He also has an old 13" bottom hat that he sometimes puts on the floor tom and whacks.

"Left to right from the driving seat his cymbals are 16" K crash, 14" hats, 8" splash, 8" EFX splash, 10" EFX splash with 8" splash above, old 13" bottom hat, 22" rivet ride, 18" China, 18" Medium crash. He also has two Ludwig cowbells, a small Remo Spoxe and Zildjian Ginger Baker 7A sticks."

1. As a member of the Graham Bond Organization in the mid-'60s Ginger played a small Ludwig Downbeat kit in Galaxy Pearl with a Leedy Broadway snare drum.

2. Cream perform on BBC's *Top Of The Pops* in December 1966. Ginger has his first Sparkling Silver Ludwigs with Rogers Swiv-o-matic fittings and prized '40s Leedy Broadway snare drum.

3. Towards the end of Cream, Ginger plays his later Sparkling Silver Ludwigs with standard-sized bass drums, Super Sensitive chrome snare and Ludwig (not Rogers) tom mounts. Note he now has double-tiered cymbals.

4. Ginger Baker performs on stage with Ginger Baker's Air Force at the Plumpton Festival, East Sussex, on 24th April 1970. The Sparkling Silver Ludwig is overlaid with Air Force stickers which include the names of band members.

1971. When I reported on the event in the *Melody Maker* we chivalrously returned a verdict of a tie. However, one of Ginger's road crew confided that his PA sound had been turned up to max and Elvin was dangerously close to being swamped.

On another occasion, Ginger joined forces with Art Blakey. "Elvin, Art Blakey and Max Roach all became very good friends of mine. I was very close to all of them and got to play with them on an equal footing. At the gig I did with Art Blakey we didn't rehearse at all. It started off as a drum battle and ended up as a drum duet. It happened at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games Jazz Festival. I'd never met Art before. We just happened to be on the same show that night and both our kits were there. Somebody said, 'Why don't you do a drum battle?'"

After the demise of Air Force, Baker went to Africa to set up a recording studio in Lagos, Nigeria where he endured many hair-raising adventures before returning home. One of his best groups in the '70s was the Baker Gurvitz Army fronted by guitarist Adrian Gurvitz. Ginger's rock drumming was heard at its most disciplined and powerful on three excellent albums. But the next few decades were a difficult time.

He travelled the world from Italy to America and back to Africa. Beset with matrimonial difficulties and financial worries he took up playing polo rather than drumming. But he played with Hawkwind in 1980, did sessions for Public Image Ltd on *Album* in 1985 and joined the LA-based Masters Of Reality in 1992.

Eventually, he returned to his jazz roots and in the '90s performed with Swedish bassist Jonas Hellborg. In 1994 he reunited with Jack Bruce in a Cream-style trio with guitarist Gary Moore. It was a good band but Ginger found their hard rock volume levels hard to bear. Jazz albums *Going Back Home* and *Falling Off The Roof* with guitarist Bill Frisell were more satisfying. He described *Coward Of The County* (1999) by the Denver Jazz Quartet aka DJQ2O as: "The best album I have ever done, even though I was playing with only 75 per cent use of my right arm after an operation. I was in quite a lot of pain."

Old friend Eric Clapton came to the rescue in 2005 when Cream was finally reunited with Eric, Jack and Ginger back in their old roles. It was wonderful to see them at the Royal Albert Hall and Madison Square Garden playing at their best, one more time. There should have been a worldwide tour but once again internal disputes put a final end to the dream.

Despite ill health, injuries and accidents Ginger Baker would battle on to the very end of his life. Living back in England he recorded one final album *Why?* (2014) by Ginger Baker's Jazz Confusion. He played his last gig in Brighton in 2019 alongside fellow drummers Peter York and Herman Rarebell, aided by his African percussionist friend Abass Dodoo. The flesh may have been weak but the spirit was forever willing.

His legacy is the power and passion of a lifetime of drumming during which he inspired so many. His example and achievements remain highly relevant today. New generations can learn from his insistence on the right to play a part in any creative process. Ginger Baker is rightly remembered and revered as every drummer's champion.

Peter 'Ginger' Baker. Born August 19th, 1939. Died October 6th, 2019.

MIXED MARSHALL ARTS

From snare hits to slamming doors and striking matches, **Andrew Marshall** tells Rhythm all about his approach to hybrid drumming, his commitment to always serving the music, and mixing brushwork and electronics with pop sensation Billie Eilish...

Writer: **David West** Images: **Matty Vogel**

"I never really saw myself as a band guy," says Andrew Marshall. "Even when I was in bands, I still felt like, how do I do justice to their music, how do I fit into their music?" Originally from New York, Marshall's career path was inspired by the legends of the session world. "When I was a kid getting into music, I wasn't necessarily checking out bands so much as I was checking out drummers," he says. "I'd go on drummerworld.com, before YouTube that was the source of drummer videos. I'd watch Steve Gadd, Jeff Porcaro, Vinnie Colaiuta, and I'd be like, oh, he played on a Steely Dan record, he played on a Carly Simon record. I was into session players, touring players. That's how I always imagined myself."

In 2016 he did his first professional tour with singer Tor Miller. "That was a 15-passenger van tour playing 300 cap. rooms and it was awesome. I'm like, I'm on the road, I'm getting paid to play music, and I had the bug from there." The following year he moved to Los Angeles where a friend in the music business put him forward to audition for fast-rising pop star Billie Eilish. He landed the gig, joining Eilish and her producer, co-writer, bassist brother Finneas O'Connell as they conquered the pop world. "It was really quick," says Marshall. "The audition was three weeks before we left for a three-and-a-half-month tour." As O'Connell programs all the drums on Eilish's records, the challenge for Marshall has been to translate those programmed beats into live performance. Fortunately, he'd started working with electronics in college, after seeing the drummers for James Blake and Björk with their hybrid kits. "I bought an SPD-SX and then a year later I bought Ableton," he says. "It was just a rabbit hole from there."

How much leeway do Billie and Finneas give you? Do they give you the album stems and say, "Do your thing"?

"I would say it's mostly do your thing. Especially now that I've been with them for a couple of years, they trust me to do justice to what they did in the studio. Of course, once we get into rehearsal things that I thought would work don't work and things change. We finesse parts, we remix samples, we change things that were samples to live drums and vice versa, but at this point I have a pretty good idea of what's going to work for their music. The flipside of it is people have asked me, 'Do you have the freedom to play your stuff, stretch out, or inject certain things?' Honestly, my goal is to do justice to their music, period. That is the whole point for me. When you're crafting a part that's going to work live, you're like an archaeologist brushing the dirt off what the part will eventually be. I don't feel the need to inject anything. It just comes out in my playing because it is me doing it, so that's what it's going to sound like, but I'm not trying to make an artistic statement on the drums myself. I'm just trying to play their music the way it should be played."

What drove your decision to switch from the Roland SPD-SX to V-Drums?

"I used an SPD-SX with Billie for probably the first year I was with her, and I've used it in many other situations. It was what I had at the time and for that first year of touring I didn't have a drum tech, I was limited in what I could carry with me. It was the easiest way to make everything that I needed to happen, happen, but I felt like I was playing a calculator. I was so focused on hitting the right pads because they are so small, I didn't feel like I could interact with Billie and Finn because I had to look at the SPD all the time. It was not a fun thing to perform on in that context. If you're playing something with a couple of samples here and there, maybe there's a clap in one song and another song might have a kick sample, that's one thing because it's easy to set up, you can just put it off to the side, but I was on it 60% of the time. I needed to do something more ergonomic, more 'drumistic', that just feels better. My set-up was inspired by a couple of people. Brendan Buckley had a Shakira touring set-up where he had two V-Drums to the right of his rack tom. That's where I was putting the SPD. My good friend Adam Christgau, who's played with Miley Cyrus, Tegan and Sara, and Troye Sivan, he had this set-up where there was no rack tom on top of the kick drum, the rack tom was to the right of the floor tom and then he had six PD8 pads on a rack where his rack toms would be. I was like, how many pads can I get away with? I settled on three. Because there are now only three surfaces instead of nine, I have to do all this automation in Ableton to change the sounds all the time. I get different sounds in verses and choruses and sometimes even bar to bar the pads will change sounds just so I can cover everything."

GEAR

DRUMS

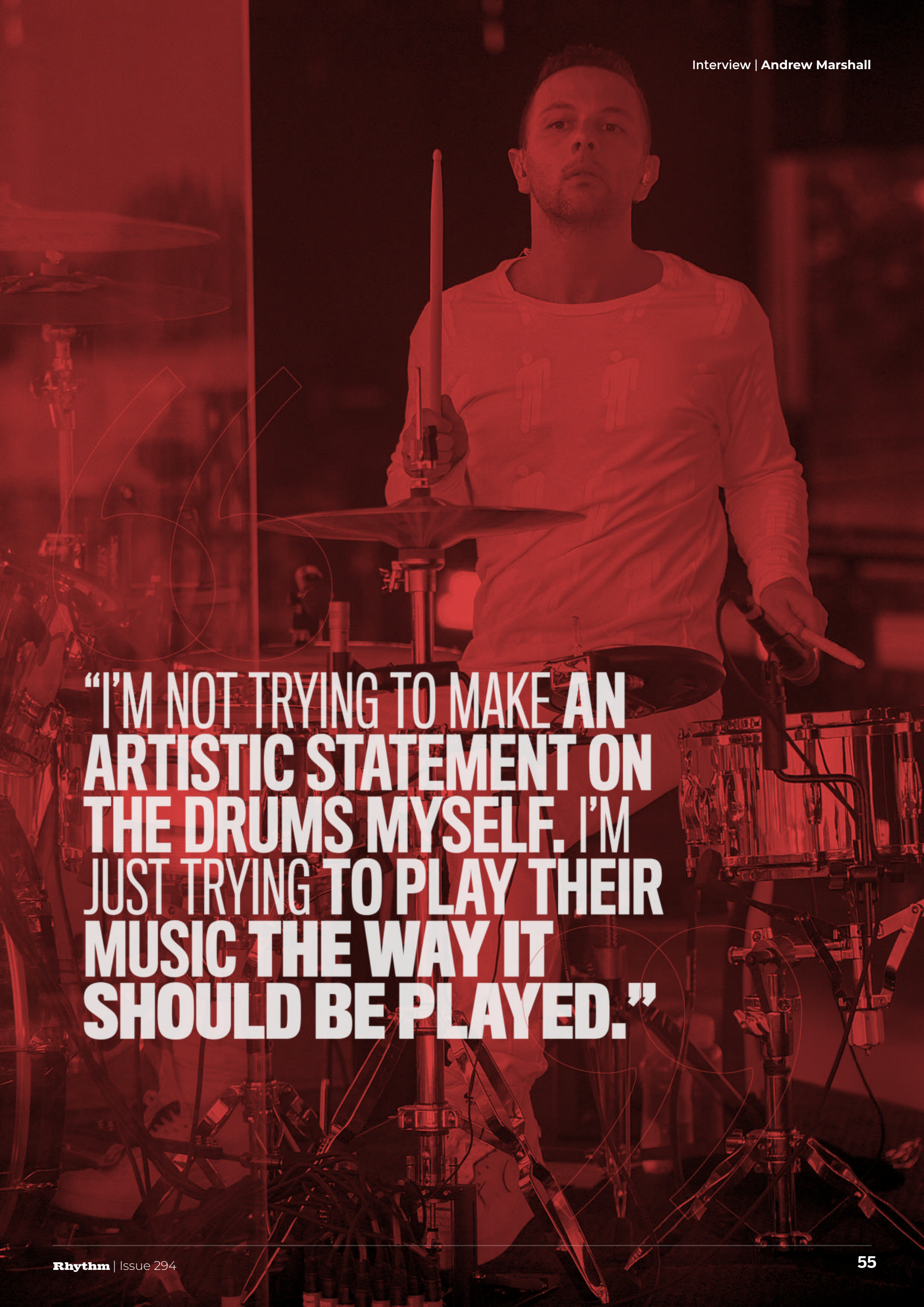
Gretsch USA Custom
22"x14" bass drum
12"x8" rack tom
14"x14" floor tom
16"x16" floor tom
14"x6½" aluminium snare
14"x6½" snare

CYMBALS

Istanbul Agop
15" Traditional Light hi-hats
20" Traditional Dark crash
24" Traditional Dark ride
20" Om crash

PLUS

Vater Buzz Kill dampener gels; Vater 1A sticks, Vater Wiretap retractable brushes and T4 timpani mallets; Remo heads: Powerstroke 3 on bass drum, Emperor Coated on toms and side snare, Controlled Sound on main snare; DW 9000 Series Double Bass Drum, DW 5000 Series Hi-Hat; Porter & Davies TT6 stool; Roland PD-85BK V-Drums (x3), KT-10 trigger pedal, TM-6 Pro and TM-2 Trigger Modules, PD-8 Trigger Pad, RT-30K and RT-30HR Triggers; iConnectivity iConnectMIDI4+; Big Fat Snare Drum Donut-XL and White Copper Bling Ring; Rhythm Tech Studio Shaker.



"I'M NOT TRYING TO MAKE **AN ARTISTIC STATEMENT ON THE DRUMS MYSELF.** I'M JUST TRYING **TO PLAY THEIR MUSIC THE WAY IT SHOULD BE PLAYED.**"

Has Finneas ever programmed a part that would need five limbs to play?
"Absolutely and I love that. I love figuring out how to take 10 drum stems and play them all. I've had to get creative. I'll layer samples. If there's ever a place where the samples are layered, I can put all those on one pad. Maybe those layers changes throughout a song and some of those samples get muted at certain points, or if one thing happens on the 'and' of '4' on every fourth bar, then you put it on a pad on that beat and then it goes away and you put something else there. All the samples are constantly changing."

Precision must be a strong requirement, knowing exactly where each sample will be and when to hit that pad?
"That was a huge learning curve over the years with these electronic gigs because I find samples to be a lot less forgiving than drums. I still do gigs where it's like okay, play eight bars then in the chorus go to the ride. It's groove. Maybe there might be a kick drum pattern that's quite specific, but by and large, you've got three voices and to make it groove but with samples, it's a whole other ball game. You're dealing with a lot of sounds and they're really important. Some of them can be really loud, like big 808 kick drums or 808 snares, explosion sounds, and if you don't hit it or you hit it on the wrong beat, the artist is going to notice because that stuff is really prominent, especially if you're in a situation where the producer is in the band, which I am. They want to hear all that stuff and I want to play it all. It's very detail oriented. When I'm learning a song for Billie especially, I'm going bar by bar dissecting every single drum stem and sample. It takes absolutely forever, but in this situation it's nice because we have the rehearsal time and once a song is locked for the live version, we're going to go out and play it for two years. I'm happy to put in the time, it's worth it to get it right."

Do you need to work with front of house to make sure the levels are right between the acoustic and electronic instruments?
"That's another huge thing. That's an area where artists and bands who are playing in small venues and trying out electronic drums for the first time don't like it. They don't feel like drums because if you're playing in a room where the drums coming off the stage are either louder than the PA or the loudest thing in the room, then most likely samples are not going to hit as hard. They're just not. If you're playing in a big room where all the sound is coming from the PA and you can't hear the live drums coming off the stage, then they can make the samples as loud as they want. We spent a lot of time levelling the samples so that they're hitting hard. You need a big PA and in-ears to mix them right. Samples needed to be treated properly in order to translate because I've seen a lot of bands playing in small rooms where the drummer goes to the SPD and it's like, 'Oh, that's a pad, mix that low', and then it's super low. For us, the samples are just as important as the drums. I'm playing samples in big choruses sometimes."

Was it an adjustment for you personally when you started playing huge shows with Billie?
"It was. I think the first time you play a gig like a Coachella or Glastonbury, it's pretty mind-blowing and it can be very intense, but we were on a continuous upward slope since we started. It wasn't like we went from a 200-cap. room to Glastonbury. First, we would play festivals where there were 2,000 people or 4,000 people. Then we inched our way up and it got to 10,000 and that was pretty crazy. Then, here or there, there would be some huge one. We played at Music Midtown in Atlanta last year, that was 30,000 people and that was the biggest crowd by a factor of three that we had ever had, so that was really intense. Last year we did Bonnaroo, Governors Ball, Lollapalooza, and those were big crowds, so it was a continuous upwards slope. We did opening shows in arenas and then we headlined an arena for the first time. Most people are like, 'She blew up'. Yeah, it's only been two years, a very quick time to go from clubs to arenas, but we've been on tour basically the whole time so we saw it every step of the way."

Sweeps and Swells – When not to use sticks

"On one song, 'Xanny', there are brushes on the record. It's a ballad where in the verse it's brushes and then the choruses are this Ringo-y, Hollywood glam ballad thing with sticks. The mallets are mostly for cymbal swells and there are a couple of songs, ballads generally, where I'm on pads pretty much the whole song and a lot of times I'll do that with mallets. There's one song 'When The Party's Over' where I chopped up these bass synth parts and put them on the pads. I'm playing these huge, long bass notes and it's just more comfortable to play with mallets. It has a different feel to it, I pretend I'm hitting a concert bass drum or timpani. There aren't really any drums in that song, so okay, I'm going to dig through the stems and find something else. These pads can play anything so why not?"

> “WHEN YOU’RE CRAFTING **A PART THAT’S GOING TO WORK LIVE,** YOU’RE LIKE AN **ARCHAEOLOGIST BRUSHING THE DIRT OFF** WHAT THE PART WILL EVENTUALLY BE.”

When you do your first 30,000 people gig, do you find the click sounds way too slow?

“100%, absolutely. That has happened to me multiple times. Even to the point where I’m looking over to the playback guy like whoa, this feels really slow. It’s crazy, those are the nights when I think man, I’m really glad I’m on a click because this show would be way faster. There’s a lot of people watching, there are musicians you respect side-stage. You’ve just got to do it. The only way to learn how to do that is to do it. No amount of rehearsal will prepare you for that.”

You play a Gretsch USA Custom kit. What sound do you want from your acoustic drums?

“I talk about the hybrid drumming thing a lot, but first and foremost I’m a drummer. I’m a drum nerd, I love talking about shells and drums, I have a bunch of vintage kits. I’m generally going for a big open, pop sound. Punchy kick drum with tone and bottom end, toms that have some resonance and body, and a super cracking, cutting snare. I have a second snare, which is tailored to the music I was given to learn. I started getting a lot of songs from them that had these really deep ballad snare sounds, or a sample where I felt like it had to be a thick, fat, space-filling snare, so the main cracking snare wasn’t working. I was like, we’ve got to do two, so I added another one and that covers all the bases.”

Your cymbals are Istanbul Agop – a brand often associated with jazz?

“With Billie, there are a couple of tunes that have a jazzy vibe to them. There’s one song, ‘Xanny’, where I play brushes. It’s funny, I’m playing brushes in an arena on a pop gig surrounded by pads with a double kick pedal. It all comes from the music. Those tones mix well with her voice. Her voice is really unique, it’s whispery and jazzy, it’s not a conventional pop voice so those cymbals fit really well in the mix. I’m not trying to cut, I’m trying to blend, those cymbals do that very well. They’re buttery, dark and warm. They’re awesome, I love those cymbals so much…”

When do you use the triggers and the Roland pedal?

“The kick drum pedal is just because I’m playing a lot of kick drum samples and there were times when I was playing them with my hands and I’d rather play those with a pedal. It frees my left hand up to play other stuff. It also happens to be a really nice feeling pedal, I don’t know how they do it, but it feels like a DW 9000. Some people use a trigger like, this is going to be my kick drum sound. To me, my kick drum is my kick drum sound… The triggers are if there are some very specific sounds happening that I want to cover. For example, in one song in the chorus, a tambourine gets layered on top of the snare, so I put a tambourine on the trigger. It’s funny, pop music is very involved. Sometimes I play a very simple kick, clap pattern but the clap sound is five different samples layered and then two of them get turned off for one beat. It’s all that attention to detail. I love that. The producer spends a lot of time looking for all those sounds, making sure they fit together well… I want to honour that… The production and the song go hand-in-hand.”

In modern pop, the sound of the drums can define the sound of a song.

“Definitely. I learned that first-hand by artists, producers, or musical directors saying to me, ‘Hey, I need this sound’, and it was something I didn’t even hear in the recording. I go back and solo the stem, oh yeah, that is in there. We talk a lot about sounds and samples on the record. You can’t gloss over them, especially with Billie because Finneas’s sound design is so creative and so unconventional. There were a lot of times when what was being played on ‘2’ and ‘4’ is not a snare drum. It’s not even close to what a snare drum sounds like. It’s a match being struck or a door slamming. I can’t just replace that with a snare drum. I have to play that, or the song is not the song.”

Gear!

The latest kits and the new gear drummers need – reviewed and rated by our team of experts

Welcome back to our newly designed reviews section and a happy New Year to you all! We hope that Santa brought you that new drum gear you were hoping for. I must have been a good boy as I found a '70's Gretsch Chrome Over Brass under the tree! Below we're talking New Year's drumming resolutions with our review team; do you think they'll stick to them?

Taking centre stage this issue we have the brand new Special Edition Legend Series Executive kit from the British Drum Company. As a special treat, our veteran reviewer and resident vintage expert, Geoff Nicholls popped over to our new studio and the two of us spent the day putting the kit through its paces. Former Rhythm editor and e-drumming expert, Stuart Williams takes a look at the powerful MIMIC Pro module from Pearl and, spoiler alert... he liked it, a lot.

Also in this issue, we check out some low-volume cymbals from new brand, UFO. On the hardware front, we're casting our eyes over the new Darwin FTW pedals from ACD Unlimited and the direct drive Dyna-Sync pedal from Tama.

Don't forget that you can find videos to accompany the majority of our reviews over on our YouTube channel. Why not subscribe and be kept in the loop on new content as soon as it lands?

Tom Bradley

Rhythm Gear Editor

Darwin FTW Hardware **p68**

Meet Rhythm's Reviewers

Rhythm has been reviewing the gear drummers need for decades. Our team of expert reviewers have sat behind countless kits on stage and in the studio so you can rely on them to bring you the right verdict every issue. Plus find out their New Year's drumming resolution...

TOM BRADLEY

With an unquenchable thirst for new drum gear, Tom is perfectly placed to be Rhythm's reviews editor. He's not only a longstanding member of our review team but also a lecturer at BIMM and a busy performing drummer. You may recognise Tom as the man behind the kit in many of the online gear videos on our YouTube channel.

MY DRUMMING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

"To finally learn David Garibaldi's amazing intro to 'Squib Cakes' – Tower of Power. I transcribed it years ago but never actually got round to working on it."

MARK WHITLAM

Mark is a freelance musician who's played for everyone from Mercury Prize nominee Eliza Carthy through to jazz and funk legend Pee Wee Ellis. He is currently one-quarter of ECM recording artist Iain Ballamy's new band, featuring pianist Jason Rebello. Mark is a senior lecturer at BIMM Institute Bristol, where he has taught for the last ten years.

MY DRUMMING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

"To keep my drums in the garage more tidy and organised!"

UFO Low Volume Cymbals
p66

Pearl MIMIC Pro E-module
p64

Tama Dyna-Sync Pedals
p70

British Drum Co. Legend Series Kit
p60

Rhythm Verdict

The **RHYTHM RECOMMENDED** award is given to those products that score seven or eight out of ten. These are products that, although not quite scoring top marks, are strong products in their field.

The **RHYTHM STAR BUY** is awarded to those products that score nine or even ten out of ten for design, construction, function and value.

Rhythm Ratings

Here's what our ratings represent.

Poor: Sub-standard product	1 - 2
Average: Acceptable but uninspiring	3 - 4
Good: Above average	5 - 6
Excellent: Superior product	7 - 8
Outstanding: Impossible to fault	9 - 10

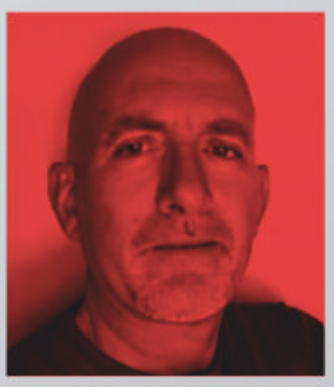
For videos of gear reviewed go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

GEOFF NICHOLLS

A regular contributor to Rhythm for over 20 years, Geoff is a musician, author, journalist, and lecturer. In the '70s he signed to Decca, EMI and Phonogram in various bands. He was then presenter on BBC's award-winning *Rockschool* in 1984 and 1987. His books include The *Drum Book: A History Of The Rock Drum Kit* and *The Drum Handbook*..

MY DRUMMING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

"To practise, play and record more. I really want to play more jazz. And not to buy any more vintage drums. I reserve the right to ignore all New Year's resolutions."



ADAM JONES

Playing for over four decades, Adam's influences are seriously varied. "I have sat kit-side in a plethora of pop, punk, ska, jazz, soul, folk and even glam rock bands; many of them average, some pretty decent and a handful seriously good," he says. "After all this time I suppose I really ought to know better, but some habits last a lifetime."

MY DRUMMING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:

"To continue to hone the subtleties – navigating the minutiae of time within time, embracing the dynamic spectrum with awareness and accuracy, and owning the biggest and most sympathetic pair of ears possible."

The British Drum Co. Legend Series Special Edition Kit

Here, at last, is the genuinely handmade flagship kit by the UK's pioneering drum company, setting the highest standards in design and quality

Words: **Geoff Nicholls**

PRICES:
22"x16" bass £1,180
12"x8" tom £625
14"x14" floor tom £994
16"x16" floor tom £1,035
14"x6½" snare drum £639

From the off in September 2015, the British Drum Company, based in Stockport, Cheshire, vowed to maintain the loftiest ideals of design and workmanship. The result is finally here with this magnificent kit from the flagship Legend Series – of which this is a Special Edition. Over and above the Legend, the SE has two special finishes (one traditional, one hi-tech) and also extra mahogany reinforcement rings inside its birch shells.

BDC's website images of the Special Edition show a knockout kit with a glorious outer veneer of "book-matched Spalted Beech taken from our private stock". Our review kit, however, has a more subdued charcoal pinstripe finish, appropriately called Executive.

Cold press build

BDC favours birch, the traditional European timber, over American maple as its staple shell building-stock. Accordingly, these shells are 100% grade-A Scandinavian birch, 10 plies, but just 6mm thick. The SE set-up has the Executive or Spalted Beech laminate mounted on a single horizontal ply of birch, then a core of two layers of 3-ply birch (V-H-V), finished off with an inner layer of two further plies of birch (V-H).

Each of these layers is hand-cut at a slight angle, then tightly clicked into place by hand in the company's own moulds. This results in joins which are air-lock tight with no chance of gaps or filler. To finish off, BDC adds a cross-ply strip of sapele (African mahogany) as a reinforcing ring, top and bottom, very slightly warming the sound. It's partly structural – giving a 12-ply bearing edge – and also partly cosmetic, yielding an inner two-tone effect reminiscent of some vintage drums.

Shells are left in the moulds to settle overnight, a seriously time consuming factor for an ever-expanding company. Most large-volume drum companies oven cure their shells in order to expedite production. BDC is committed to its cold press method, adamant that heating is no way to treat quality wood, indeed that it has a detrimental effect on the ultimate sound.

Once out of the moulds the bearing edges are routed at 45 degrees, while the insides are sanded incredibly smooth – so smooth that they could in truth be an outside finish.

The review kit is 22"x16", 12"x8", 14"x14" and 16"x16" with a matching 14"x6½" snare drum. But SE drums are available individually, so you can specify any tom size from 6"x6" to 14"x10", while floor toms are 14"x14", 16"x16" or 18"x16". Bass drums are all 16" deep and range from 18" to 26" in diameter. There are also gong drums in 8" depth and a choice of 18", 20" or 22" diameter.

Art Deco support

The most expensive hurdle for a young drum company is fabricating unique metalwork, the hardware that defines the look and elevates the brand from an assembler of generic parts to a full-blown, heavyweight contender. BDC has approached this task with the same meticulous attention to detail as it has with its shells. The Palladium hardware is chromed to a dazzling shine and the mix of classic Art Deco lines with a modern twist is pure class.

Aside from the single-ended ribbed Palladium lugs, the snare has a Palladium Mark-II strainer with 20 strand BDC brass snare wires slung from BDC's own logoed woven nylon fabric tapes.

Equally striking are the small tom and floor tom leg brackets which are isolated

They Say:

KEITH KEOUGH
The CEO and founder of the BDC is also one of the world's leading drum designers.

Keith, you're particularly proud of your shells?
"They're the result of years of building and testing. We make our own veneers from our own single-ply finest grade-A Finnish birch - the hardest wood from the tree centre. Other companies buy plywood pre-fabricated, that's occasionally sapwood, not the same quality."

What exactly is the Executive finish?
"It's made from black tulip. We literally chop that up using a Stanley knife and we hand inlay the pinstripe lines! We don't use saws or a veneer stitcher, we book-match veneers by hand."

The finish is the major difference between Legend and Legend SE?
"It accounts for the price difference (around 20-30%). That and the mahogany re-rings. But the sound is essentially the same. The other difference is you can have whatever sizes you want. No pre-packed configurations."

And you're environmentally committed?
"Yes. Any exotic timber, it's where a tree has fallen. We might do a new finish while still offering the Spalted Beech – honestly, it's until the veneer runs out. Our Keo percussion is all made from off-cuts of the Legend series!"

"BDC IS COMMITTED TO ITS COLD PRESS METHOD, ADAMANT THAT HEATING IS NO WAY TO TREAT QUALITY WOOD, INDEED THAT IT HAS **A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE ULTIMATE SOUND."**

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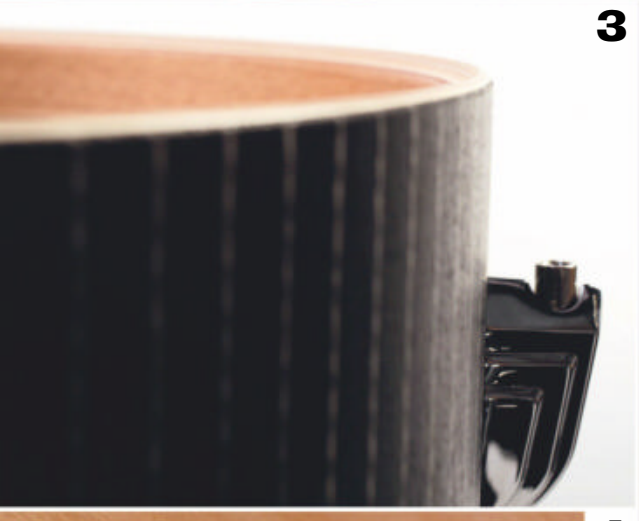

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1. PINSTRIPE EXECUTIVE BLACK TULIP
BDC is famous for its original approach to drum finishes, which again singles the company out as following a unique path.

2. STREAMLINED ART DECO LUGS
Palladium tension lugs combine the Art Deco looks of Ludwig's Imperial with a modern twist.

3. 45-DEGREE BEARING EDGES
Rich sapele mahogany reinforcing rings contrast with the pale birch shell at the expertly finished bearing edges.

4. INNER BADGE AND LEGEND (4537/8)
Made from recycled wood chips, the inner badge has a hologram serial number plate and asserts 'Cold Press Moulding'.

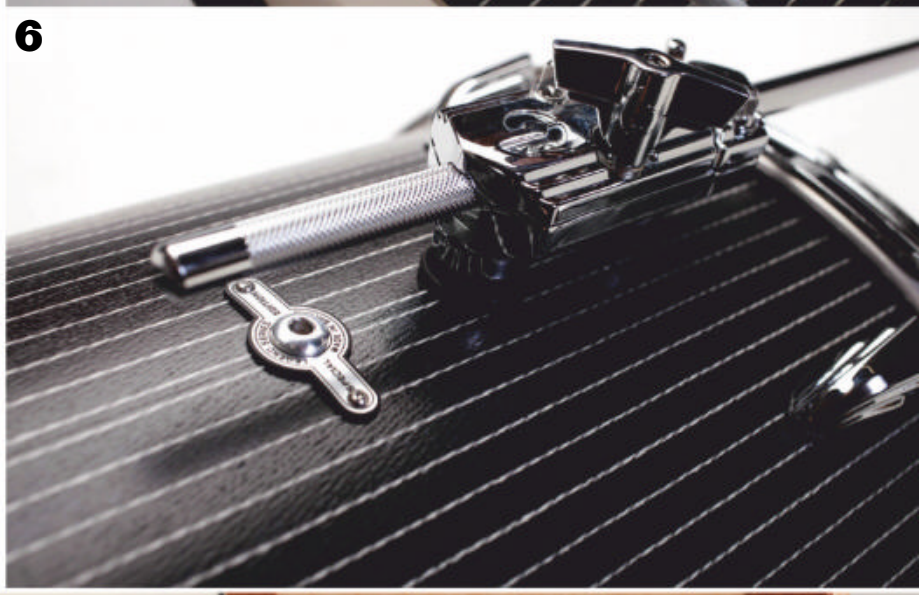
5. BASS DRUM HOOP CLAWS
The moulded claws with rubber inserts grip tightly on the wood hoops, banishing any chance of slipping or rattling.

6. TOM ISOLATION BRACKETS
Continuing the Art Deco design, the mounting brackets for both small and larger toms are isolated from the shell while V-shaped memory locks slide in snugly from below.

7. PALLADIUM SNARE STRAINER
BDC's Palladium version two strainer and 20-strand brass wires have stylish logo-bearing nylon fabric straps.

8. CLICK AND COLD PRESS
BDC's 10-ply birch shells with two-ply mahogany re-rings are all hand cut and clicked into place in the company's own moulds.

5



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7 8

from the shells by twin rubber bosses, with hard and soft rubber washers. V-shaped memory locks dock securely into the bottom of each bracket creating a union that cannot twist.

The bass drum spurs are strong but not overly bulky. In fact, with minimal hardware attached to it, the bass drum itself is surprisingly light. BDC's new KickFix Velcro spur anchors would be a wise extra purchase.

Sound report

So on to the performance. For this review, we do something different. Reviews editor Tom Bradley and I meet up at Rhythm's new professional reviewing studio where Tom has already set up the kit and is joyfully leathering it as I arrive. The thunderous, clean, fat and balanced sound of the whole kit fills the large recording room as Tom – a big chap with a powerful style – has great fun knocking up some modern funky rock grooves.

The first thing to grab me is the snare drum – 14"x6½", sweet and phat, a standout slap conjoined with the resolute tone of birch. The two floor toms are really happening too, filling the room with a massive, pummelling Bo Diddley thump. Decisive, with weight and a clean tone.

The 22"x16" bass drum has its front head intact and no damping. I'm able to get a good distance away due to the large room, so that out front it delivers the full unbridled Simon Phillips-like roar in its rounded tone. Tom though is a little uncomfortable from the driving seat, feeling the need for some internal damping. So we remove the front head, insert a sizeable pillow and reassemble. Happier now, the sound is more controlled and darker, edgier and tighter for miking/recording purposes. Out front the difference is less noticeable, though there's a bit more definition; but from a playing perspective, Tom finds it drier, clickier and more acceptable. He feels "there's a really solid attack from the low tuned batter head. The pillow is pushed against the batter head, but there's still life in it, it's not stifled, there's still a sonic tail on it."

Which just leaves the 12"x8" tom and initially we do have a small problem. It's lacking power compared with the other drums, slightly blippy and muffled. Removing the tom from its clamp and striking it while holding loosely the sustain definitely increases. This is the effect of any mounting bracket, despite all design efforts – which is why many drummers place their small tom on a snare stand. And indeed BDC itself has a top solution for this, which is the company's own Tom Clips: three small nylon grippers which slot over the bottom tension rods and lift the drum clear of the snare drum basket arms.

Another factor, of course, is always the head. The toms all have two-ply Emperor batters and personally, I'm more acclimatised to thinner Ambassadors, at least on smaller toms. Anyway, after tuning up the bottom head and slackening the batter a fraction, generally playing it in more, the tom definitely starts to perform better. Showing that even with the best-made drums, patience and experimentation are required.

While we're at it, we tune the snare right up and the slap really cuts through the panorama of the overall kit sound. The crack increases dramatically, while not diminishing the chocolatey thickness and sweet tone.

"THE SNARE SLAP REALLY CUTS THROUGH THE PANORAMA OF THE OVERALL KIT SOUND. THE CRACK INCREASES DRAMATICALLY, WHILE NOT DIMINISHING THE CHOCOLATEY THICKNESS AND SWEET TONE."

CONTACT
The British Drum Company
Tel: 0161 804 4720
www.britishdrumco.com

Verdict

We often hear that cliché, "the UK does not manufacture anything anymore." Nonsense. BDC's Legend SE is a hand-built, world-leading drum series, cause for huge pride and optimism.

Rhythm Rating

9/10

Pearl MIMIC Pro E-module

Pearl and Steven Slate's collaboration looks to imitate an acoustic kit

Words: **Stuart Williams**

PRICE: £2,250

Something is changing in the world of digital drums. While triggering and layering samples on top of an acoustic kit is nothing new, it wasn't that long ago that gigging a purely electronic kit with the aim of emulating acoustic sounds was pretty much out of the question. For a kick-off, they looked weird, and more importantly, the sample quality just wasn't up to the job without being bolstered by some real dynamics from the drums. More recently, however, the advances in hard drives and computer processing mean that housing gigabytes of velocity-layered samples within a module can now be a realistic goal. Couple this with plenty of options in terms of realistic shell-like pad designs, and we are now at a point where digital drums are becoming a viable all-round solution.

That's what we have here. The MIMIC Pro is a collaboration between Pearl (no stranger to electronic drums) and drum sample guru, Steven Slate offering sounds derived from the Slate SSD 5 software, in a sleek and modern new touchscreen-equipped format.

So what are we actually getting? First up, the sounds. The MIMIC plays host to a library of 24-bit acoustic drum samples; no DJ scratches, orchestra hits or synthetic drums here, then. The kits have been captured with around 28 velocity layers per voice, with a further 12 variations in its arsenal for each velocity, meaning it will 'round robin' the samples to avoid playing the same exact sound twice in a row. Throw in some modelling (as the MIMIC does) and our manual tells us that we have a whopping 4096 possible playback layers per-voice. The result? Well, we're hoping that means some very realistic playback and no machine-gun-like triggering. In fact, the instructions waste no time in informing us that the MIMIC is home to "the greatest drum samples ever created".

Then there's the physical aspect of the module, as you can see, it's a minimalist, sleek layout which features one rotary encoder and a 7-inch touchscreen on the front, and nothing else. On the back of the module is a busy panel packed with sockets giving you 16 dual-trigger inputs (plus hi-hat control), a USB socket for adding more sounds via a memory stick, an RJ45 'EXT' socket (currently reserved for future use). In addition, there are 6 analogue output jacks, plus a DB25 connection for outputs 7-14, MIDI in and out (5-pin din) and an aux input for

"UTILISING **THE INTERNAL PLAYBACK ENGINE** FOR BACKING TRACKS AND **AUDIO CLICK TRACKS** MEANS THAT YOU COULD REALLY **MAKE THE MIMIC THE CENTREPIECE OF A LIVE SETUP**."

monitoring incoming audio through the module. On the side of the module sits an SD card slot for adding further samples, songs and backing tracks and booting updates to the MIMIC.

Inside the box, our MIMIC comes with a power brick, which in turn is bundled with several plug adaptors – a small gripe, and one that can be overcome by replacing half of the cable or fitting a plug – but this is not a cheap module. We'd find it more reassuring if it came with a properly equipped cable.

When encountering such a technologically advanced piece of kit, it's advisable to read the manual. But that's no fun at all, so instead we get started by connecting some Roland PDX pads (we also tried some acoustic triggers) from our e-kit. So far, so good. We've spent enough time jogging and scrolling through menus to understand the need for decent control, so it's a testament to the MIMIC's touch screen that the only reason we found to reach for the manual was to check some technical questions. Everything revolves around a home screen that means you can easily find and change the settings you're looking for. Want to select a kit? Press the big left or right arrows. Change the balance of the instruments in your headphones? Swipe the volume controls for each. Essentially, if there's a function you're looking for, you'll find the correct menu here. It's really simple, and we were able to start replacing voices, editing the pitch of sounds and applying effects without having to look anything up.

We've reviewed various versions of the Stephen Slate samples, and these are well known for being some of the go-to sample replacement options for big-name producers. But what we found with the MIMIC took the same raw samples to a slightly different place compared to running it through our regular module and computer. It's responsive, and not just in terms of latency (or lack of it). While we can't say that we can detect thousands of velocity layers, there is a natural dynamic response straight out of the box that we haven't experienced from any other module. This is most evident on snares and cymbals, where buzz rolls and ghost notes take on an addictive realism, particularly combined with the level of interaction on offer between mic placements and routing within the sound engine.

The kit sounds themselves are varied enough to get you through any gig, with only the brush samples leaving us a little indifferent.

This review only really allows for us to touch on the features within the MIMIC; the output routing alone offers an impressive tool for stage and studio use, giving you heaps of flexibility for sending each voice to its own channel or bus. As well as this, utilising the internal playback engine for backing tracks and audio click tracks means that you could really make the MIMIC the centrepiece of a live setup.

There is the small question of price. Streeting at just over £2,000 for the module alone, it's a serious outlay to rival a Roland TD-50 module, and that's before you start considering triggering options. That said, a MacBook running nothing other than Steven Slate Drums, plus an interface to give you similar routing options will set you back somewhere approaching this. What the MIMIC provides is an all-in-one, reliable solution that didn't lock up or crash once during our time with it, always maintained a natural feel and sounded as good or better as any drum module we've ever heard. The best ever created? We don't think that's entirely hyperbole.

CONTACT
www.pearleurope.com

1. Operation of the module is carried out from the touchscreen, other than that, there's one jog wheel for making adjustments.
2. The back panel of the MIMIC is packed with trigger inputs, multiple outputs and MIDI sockets.
3. From this screen, it's easy to work out how to access triggering settings, adjust levels or build your own kit. No need for deep-dives on the menus.
4. The MIMIC claims to be compatible with pretty much any dual-zone pads and triggers, so you're not tied to using a particular manufacturer's gear.

Verdict

A rock-solid solution to triggering high-resolution sounds. It's intuitive to use and responds fantastically to your playing dynamics: a worthy contender in the top end of the market.

Rhythm Rating

9/10

UFO Low Volume Cymbals

A new range of low volume cymbals falls from the sky...

Words: **Adam Jones**

PRICES:
14" Crash £62
16" Crash £70
18" Crash £78
20" Ride £93
14" Hi-hats £101
UFO Cymbal Set
(14", 16", 20" & bag) £202
UFO Cymbal Set XL
(14", 16", 18", 20" & bag) £249

Landing amidst the bustling market of practice cymbal choices comes a new range from a new name – UFO. Based in Denmark, the brand was launched last year by gKompagny, best known for manufacturing SlapKlatz dampening gels.

Deliberately quiet cymbals were devised to meet the practice needs of drummers (and the peace and quiet needs of their neighbours). While silencing pads reduce the volume of acoustic drums with a negligible effect on feel, conventional cymbal dampening solutions choke the life out of the sound and make the bronze feel stiff and unyielding. Rather than try to alter the sound characteristics of 'real' cymbals the solution was to develop dedicated practice cymbals, engineered to behave like regular cymbals at a fraction of the volume.

Hence the rapid profusion of colander-like cymbals now produced by pretty much every cymbal manufacturer (with a few notable exceptions). The UFO offerings are competitively priced and the parent company brings with it a wealth of cymbal making experience. UFO cymbals are currently available in two sets: a three-piece (14" hats/16" crash/20" ride) and the review package (the same trio but with an additional 18" crash). Both options come with a soft bag and individual cymbals can also be purchased separately. The cymbals are made from zinc and, as with all low volume cymbals, contain a distinctive mass of perforations, punched in after initial shaping has taken place. The resulting holes not only make each cymbal lighter but also cause the remarkable drop in volume.

These are genuinely quiet cymbals that still manage to behave like real instruments. The crashes swell and fade, the ride pulses, while the hats slap and chick. Pitches are unmistakably higher than regular cymbals (they are, after all, zinc) but the stick sound is positive and surprisingly solid, eclipsing any sustain that contact elicits. If you've not played this type of cymbal before the patently thin tonality does seem incongruous at first, but the physical response is what's important here. The UFO Low Volume cymbals are accurate, allowing you to play into them in exactly the same way as you would full volume cymbals without disturbing the neighbours or punishing your own ears.

1. Holy metal! Practice cymbals are easily recognised by the pattern of sound reduction holes stamped out of the body.

2. Holes aside, UFO cymbals resemble regular cymbals with tapered bows and rising bells.

3. They came from outer space... While UFO cymbals play like the real thing the sound they produce is much quieter and more sibilant

NB As an added bonus, UFO cymbals can be fitted with triggers making them suitable for live work with electronic kits.

CONTACT
www.ufocymbals.com

Verdict

Practice does make perfect and low volume cymbals are a great tool for the student and seasoned player alike. These UFO models are reassuringly playable and good value to boot.

Rhythm Rating

7/10

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Drum Summit: Monette Marino & Students · Beatmaking: Zoe Larios

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HIT LIKE A GIRL®
2020

courtesy of Rhythm

ACD Unlimited Darwin FTW Pedals

Fashioned in the workshop of a fellow drummer, this bespoke engineered hardware has a fresh take on some pedal limitations

Words: **Mark Whitlam**

PRICES:
Single pedal with backpack £475
(Plus direct drive option £505)
Remote hi-hat with backpack £425

There is a workshop in South West Austria where a forward-thinking, mould-breaking mind is hard at work. This problem-solving intellect belongs to Dennis Namesnik who pushes boundaries in design and manufacture of drum hardware. He places ergonomics and practicality at the forefront of his vision.

Darwin FTW bass drum pedal

There are so many options on the market for bass drum pedals, with variations running the gamut from drive type (chain, strap, direct) to long-board options and even 24-carat gold plating. What else could the drummer need in a pedal? The Darwin draws from all of the best design features out there, refines them and packages them in the most logical and drummer-centric pedal one could imagine.

We took the Darwin FTW bass drum pedal to a recording session at Rockfield Studios to give it a test drive over a few days. The review model was shipped in a bespoke backpack which neatly fitted both the bass drum pedal and the remote hi-hat, making this an ideal portable and lightweight hardware solution. The upright part of the pedal folds away by detaching it from the base very easily with the aid of a drum key, becoming flat in profile.

The pedal shipped with both belt/strap drive and direct link, which are interchangeable within seconds using a drum key. The strap drive has a more fluid feeling to it, with the direct drive having a sense of greater power and urgency, as is typically the case.

5. While the hi-hat pedal is lightweight, it can result in it lifting off the ground when using some foot techniques.

One of the best design features is the spring tension adjustment, located centrally in the vertical post with easy access for fingers to twist a notched screw mechanism. This is so much easier and faster to deal with than the usually massively frustrating system used on most pedals of fiddling around with mechanisms at the bottom of the spring mount. We can't begin to express what a breath of fresh air this is, making for quick adjustments while the pedal is in situ mounted to the bass drum hoop. The attention to detail in build quality and no-nonsense usability of this bass drum pedal is simply world-class.

There are many other adjustments which are typically achieved in a more efficient fashion than with the majority of pedals on the market. These include independently altering the footplate height/angle from the beater angle, and drum key multiple adjustments of the special built-in cam design, which allows for a variety of leverage options to increase acceleration of the beater towards the end of the throw.

This is one of the least resistant pedals we've come across and yet it feels fully connected at all times to the velocity of each foot stroke. It recoils with ease and continues to slowly dissipate its energy for quite a while if you take your foot away. Clearly, the bearings and engineering here are of extremely high quality. When attempting to change out the Darwin beater for a heavier weight DW felt beater, we found surprisingly that it does not fit. The diameter of the third-party beater is too large for the Darwin. This seems like a rather surprising oversight given the other highly considered, rival-beating design features. Hopefully, future models will accommodate all third-party beater rod dimensions. It's worth noting however that other, interchangeable bass drum beaters are available from ACD for the Darwin pedals to add variety.

Remote hi-hat

This is a very strong yet lightweight design made from a carbon fibre stem which can be clamped to other hardware or a rack. There is a brilliant and unique retractable rod (also featured in the standard hi-hat stand design) meaning no dismantling or trying to find the rod in your hardware case is needed. The foot pedal design is similar in shape to the bass drum pedal and features a quickly fitted and detachable cord fitting, which is available in different lengths. One thing to note about the pedal base is while using a heel-toe technique, the front of the pedal lifts off the floor due to the lightweight nature of its design.

"THE ATTENTION TO DETAIL IN BUILD QUALITY AND NO-NONSENSE USABILITY OF THE BASS DRUM PEDAL IS WORLD-CLASS."

1. The detachable vertical post of the bass drum pedal folds down flat for transport in the rucksack.
2. A graduated and notched spring tensioner is located centrally for ease of access.
3. The built-in variable cam positioning can be changed using a drum key for different feels.
4. The strap or direct drive can be switched out easily in seconds.

The tension setting is very easy to change using a similar design to the bass drum pedal. Having experimented with the tension settings, we noticed it required a good deal of downward pressure to achieve a tight hi-hat sound. While the response of the pedal was speedy with no sign of the inherent lag often found in these devices, the mechanism felt a little gritty underfoot, as if there was some resistance or friction on the cable which could be felt transferred through the pedal board. We look forward to checking out the standard hi-hat which has a unique retractable leg design.

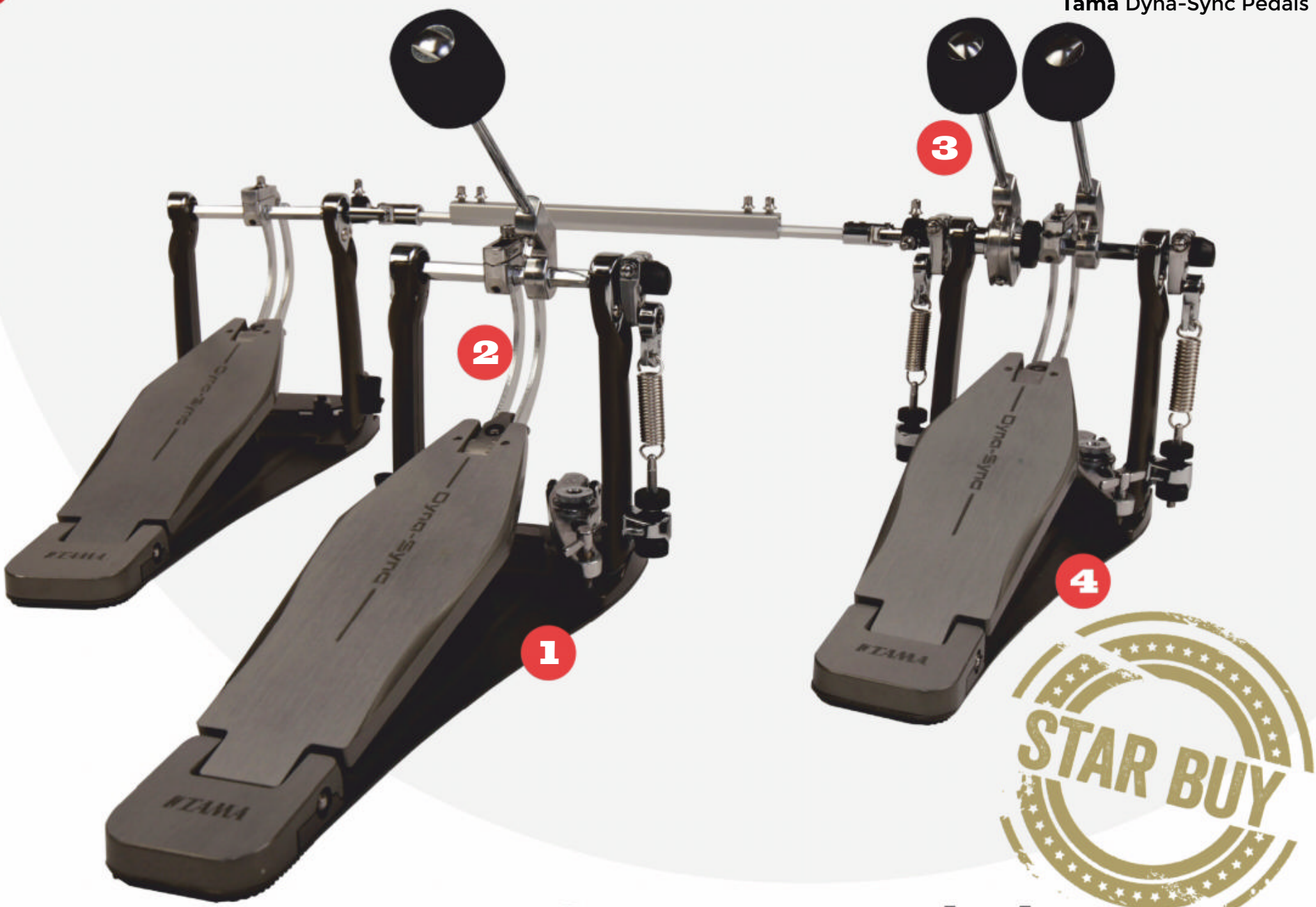
CONTACT
ACD Unlimited
Email: office@acd-drums.at
www.acd-drums.at

Verdict

A superb customisable bass drum pedal with a price tag that reflects the high quality of engineering. The lightweight design and backpack make for a clever portable gigging solution.

Rhythm Rating

7/10



STAR BUY

Tama Dyna-Sync Pedals

Tama makes its debut into the world of direct-drive

Words: **Tom Bradley**

PRICES:
Single £259
Double £569

During many successful years in production and particularly since the release of its workhorse Iron Cobra pedal in 1992, Tama has forged a reputation not only for high-level drum craftsmanship but also reliable and heavy duty hardware. The Japanese company whose pedal range also includes the Speed Cobra is now moving in a new direction with its first direct-drive offering.

With a title reminiscent of classic drum products from days-gone-by, you could be forgiven for assuming that Tama's new offering will be a lightweight, vintage-inspired affair but that couldn't be further from the truth. The Dyna-Sync is, in fact, an impressively heavy duty bit of kit with a host of modern features. The name is derived from Tama's new 'Dynamic Synchronisation System' which combines three core features at the heart of the pedal. The combination of an optimised transmission design, dual linkage and slidable cam is intended to "achieve the perfect balance between power, speed and feel".

1. Finished in a natural brushed steel, the pedals are available in single or double models (although no lefty double is available).

2. Tama's 'Dynamic Synchronisation System' combines an optimised transmission design, dual linkage and slidable cam to offer a balance of power, speed and feel.

3. Other noteworthy features include the Dyna Beater, Sync Coil, Swivel Spring Tight, Paraclamp II Pro and Oiles Bearing Hinge.

4. The foot board angle adjustment allows for quick adjustments and works completely independently from the rest of the pedal.

The optimised transmission design refers to the transfer of energy from footboard to beater shaft. This is partly aided by the curved shape of the steel link which as the 'dual linkage' label suggests, is actually two separate steel pieces offering more stability and power. The slidable cam is an incredibly smart feature which allows the turning radius to be altered simply by loosening a grub screw and sliding the mechanism back or forward between 'small' and 'large' settings. While changing the upper position of the linkage, the difference in speed and acceleration are notable – creating a similar effect to the interchangeable cam types found on other pedals. We find that the large cam setting provides a weightier feel underfoot while the short setting allows for much speedier footwork – all without even touching the spring setting.

With a host of other features including the new felt Dyna Beater, a heavier gauge Sync Coil, Swivel Spring Tight, Paraclamp II Pro and Oiles Bearing Hinge – one of the standout design details has to be the footboard angle adjustment. This foolproof system allows for quick adjustments and works independently from other elements of the pedal. It makes balancing double pedal settings satisfyingly straightforward.

CONTACT
www.tama.com

Verdict

This pedal offers a high level of customisation without being overly complicated in its design. It builds on years of Tama's R&D with the Cobra Series and offers something for every type of player.

Rhythm Rating

9/10

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Beats working

Every drummer needs Rhythm. Exclusive lessons from our expert team...

Welcome to Beats Working where in this issue Colin, Erik and myself explore the world of ghost notes in our respective 'Getting Started', 'Creative Concepts' and 'Technical Difficulties' lessons.

In 'Percussion Toolbox' all-round percussion guru Pete Lockett continues his look at playing the cajon and how we can directly apply certain aspects of kit playing.

In his "drum lesson without picking up the sticks" on page 84, Mike looks at ideas for developing creativity, while in 'So You Want To Play Hybrid?' on page 89, Tom Bradley continues his look at integrating electronics into an acoustic kit set-up.

In 'Four-Piece Fills' on page 79, Jason offers another killer four-piece fill idea, this time featuring four-stroke ruffs broken up between the hands and bass drum.

And finally, our play-along tracks include The Clash classic 'London Calling' and up and coming rockers Greta Van Fleet's 'Highway Tune'. Here you'll find both pieces broken down, with key elements demonstrated, ready for you to play along to the 'minus drums' versions of the tracks.

Enjoy!

Pete Riley, Beats Working Editor

Introducing our expert tutors (and their drumming New Year's resolution)

PETE RILEY

In his 35 years of playing Pete has recorded and toured with a wide range of artists from Guthrie Govan to Keith Emerson (ELP). He's also been active in the world of education for many years, started writing for Rhythm in '93, has been teaching at ACM for some 21 years and more recently at WaterBear in Brighton.

MY DRUMMING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

"To continue my pursuit of open-handed playing (to improve my matched grip technique) and get involved in more creative playing opportunities."

JASON BOWLD

Jase has been the drummer for Welsh rock/metal titans Bullet for my Valentine since 2015. He began drumming aged 12 and turned professional at 21. He joined UK industrial legends Pitchshifter from 1999 to 2007, during which time his session drumming career took shape. He's played with Killing Joke, Pop Will Eat Itself, Fightstar, and even Bill Bailey.

MY DRUMMING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

"I don't believe in them! But if I have to make one, it would be to continue listening to other cool musicians and broadening my musical horizons."

ERIK STAMS

Born and raised in NYC, Erik has over 20 years of performing, recording, television, film and teaching experience. He's performed and recorded with artists including Jamie Lawson, Zervas and Pepper, Butch Thomas, Jon Langford, The Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and The Darling Buds. He is head of drums at BIMM London.

MY DRUMMING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

"Much of my current practice is devoted to the repertoire for the various musical projects I'm involved with. My resolution would be to carve out more practice time for creative exploration."

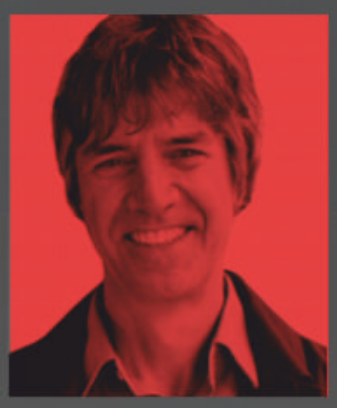
PETE LOCKETT

Pete is one of the most versatile multi-percussionists on the planet and has played a dizzying range of instruments with artists including Björk, Peter Gabriel, Robert Plant, Michael Nyman, and the Pet Shop Boys; and on a plethora of Hollywood films. He continues to tour worldwide as a soloist, collaborator and educator.

MY DRUMMING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

"When I get inspired by something I resolve to dig deep into it. I have just got through a couple of PhD theses on South Indian rhythm and it has driven me to get even more into the modulation of long passages of rhythm."

Image: Virginia Turbett/Getty Images



MIKE STURGIS

A 15-year veteran of writing for Rhythm magazine, Mike Sturgis has appeared live and on record with artists including A-ha, Steve Winwood, Jack Bruce, David Bowie, Elton John, Tom Jones, Bob James, Asia, Beverly Knight and many more. He plays with Redtenbacher's Funkestra and The Staks and is head of education for DIME Online.

MY DRUMMING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

"My 2020 resolution is to be more disciplined in my practice routine. I've been playing for a long time but I would still like to improve!"

COLIN WOOLWAY

Colin has been playing and teaching drums professionally since 1976. He has done every kind of gig including eight years with rock icon Suzi Quatro. He is the founder of the Drumsense teaching programme and has written for Rhythm for over 20 years! Colin teaches at studios in Twickenham, The Brit School, and ELAM.

MY DRUMMING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

"I'm going to master the Single Flammed Mill rudiment! I feel I've missed out on this one, it has many possibilities and will only do me good!"

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For the featured tuition videos go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Getting Started

Ghost notes are nothing to be scared of if you follow **Colin Woolway**'s expert advice

Welcome to another drum lesson in my Getting Started series! Today we are looking at ghost notes.

What is a ghost note? A ghost note is a note with rhythmic value but no discernible pitch. For example, a muted string plucked in rhythm but with no actual pitched note. Drummers interpret ghost notes as very light, muted taps on a drum, the key word being "muted". Please note: they are not to be confused with grace notes which have a musical pitch but no rhythmic or mathematical value! Most people's favourite example of ghosting in a drum groove is Jeff Porcaro's drum track on 'Rosanna' by Toto.

For Colin's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Heads up

The key to this technique is 'dynamics'. Instead of trying to make your ghost notes quieter, start at the bottom of the strike and raise it to barely audible!

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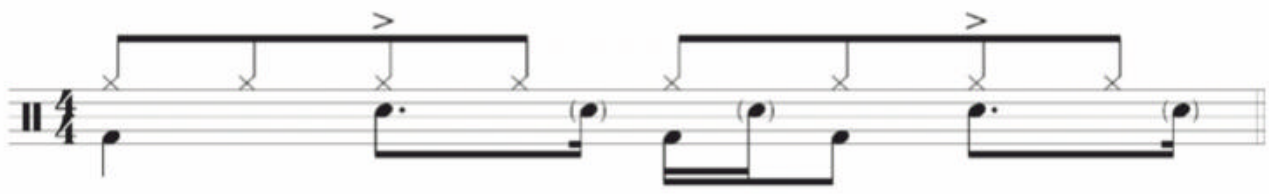
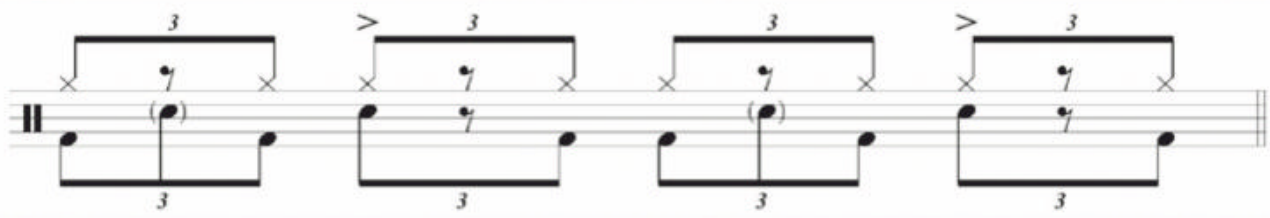
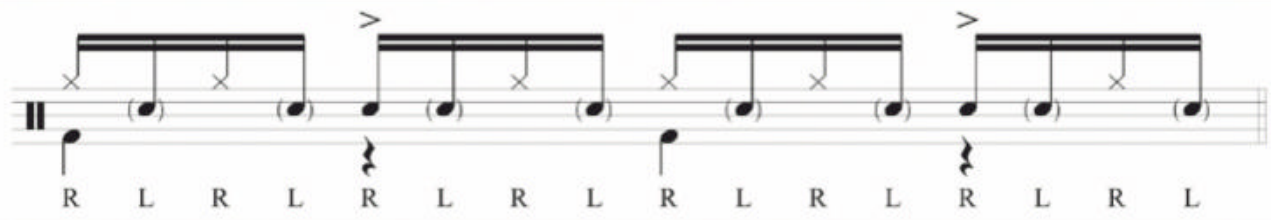
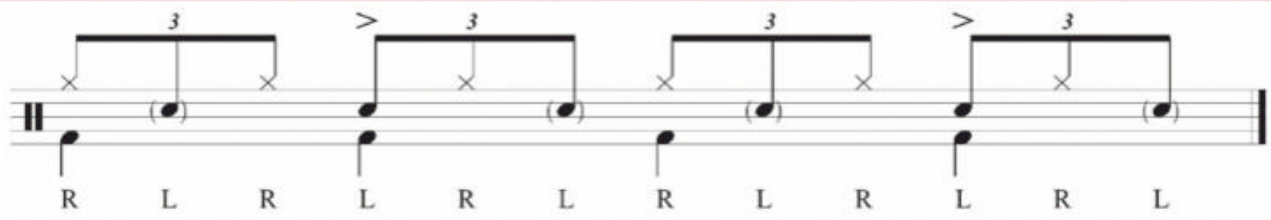

Example 1 has us playing a funky groove with the backbeat accented and the notes in between the hi-hat played as ghost notes.

2



Example 2 is a shuffle with some ghost notes played on the second partial of the triplet before the backbeat.

3

Example 3 is a sneaky 16th-note groove with the left-hand playing ghost notes throughout, the right-hand accenting the backbeat.

4

Example 4 is the triplet equivalent of Example 3, left-hand playing the backbeat as well as ghosting on the snare.

Creative Concepts

Get ghost notes into your grooves like the greats do, says **Erik Stams**

In this issue we'll be focusing on ghost notes. Ghost notes are musical notes that are played very quietly; so quietly that they are often felt more than heard. Clyde Stubblefield, Jabo Starks, Mitch Mitchell, Bernard Purdie, James Gadson, Dave Garibaldi, Chris Dave and Mark Guiliana – these are just a few of the many drummers who masterfully use ghost notes in their playing. Ghost notes can be played on any instrument (bass, guitar, drums etc). This lesson focuses on ghosted snare drum notes within the context of a groove.

In music, the term 'dynamics' is used to describe changes in volume and intensity. In order to play ghost notes effectively, a musician needs to develop dynamic control. Examples 1–4 illustrate a few different hi-hat/ghost note patterns in context with bass drum patterns (Exs. 5–8). Notice how the backbeat is emphasised while the other snare drum notes are ghosted. Practice playing the backbeat as a downstroke in order to ensure ghost notes are kept quiet. Example 4 utilises a 16th-note hi-hat pattern. Make sure that unisons between the hands are not flammed. All of these rhythms can be played with swung 16ths as well (Ex. 9). Example 10 introduces the open hi-hat sound to all of the previous grooves. Focus on the length of the open hi-hat note. Enjoy!

For Erik's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Dynamics – the variation in loudness between musical notes or phrases.

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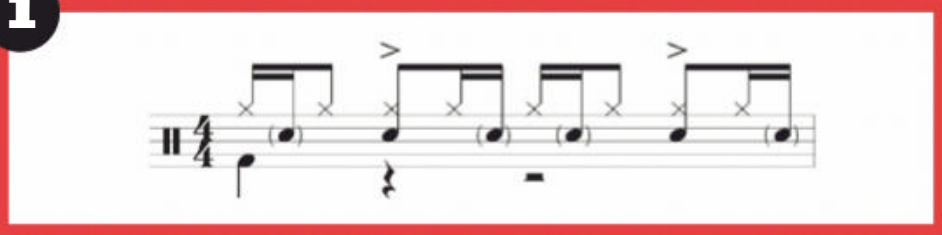
A basic ghost note and hi-hat ostinato.

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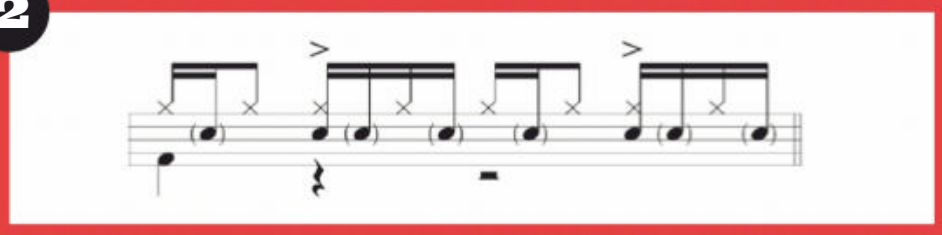

Introducing additional ghost notes.

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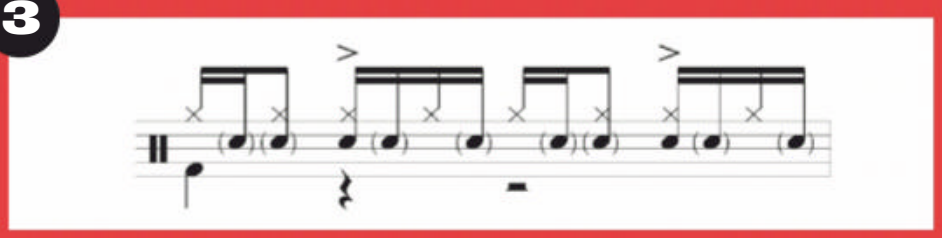
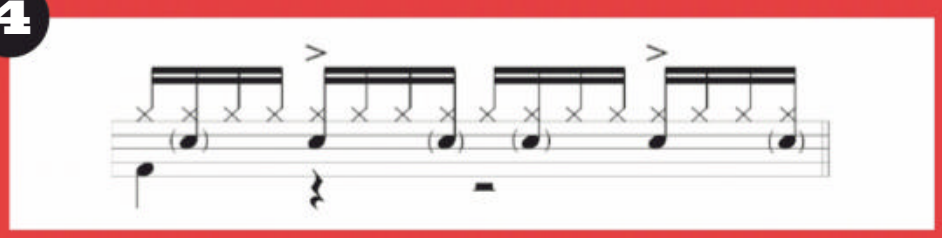

Even more ghost notes in Examples 3 and 4.

4



Single-handed 16ths on the hi-hat with ghosted snare drum notes and backbeat.

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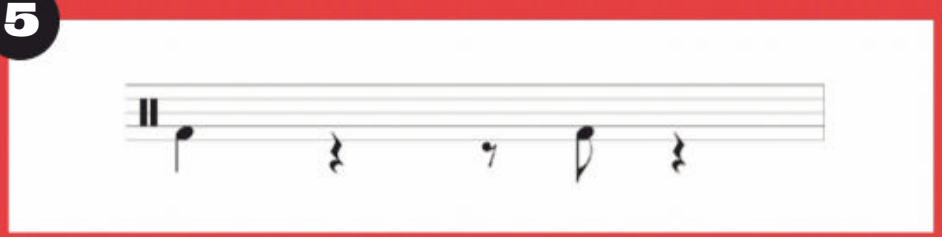
Bass drum variations (apply to previous patterns).

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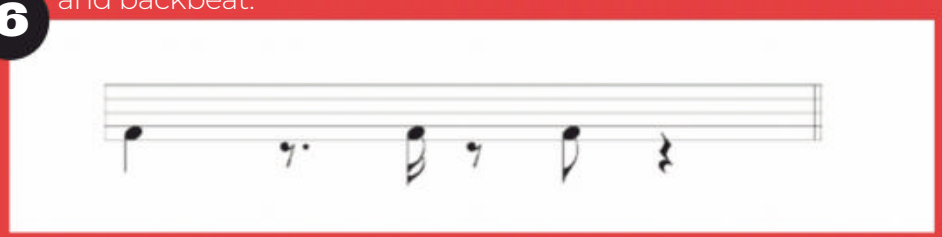
A more syncopated bass drum pattern.

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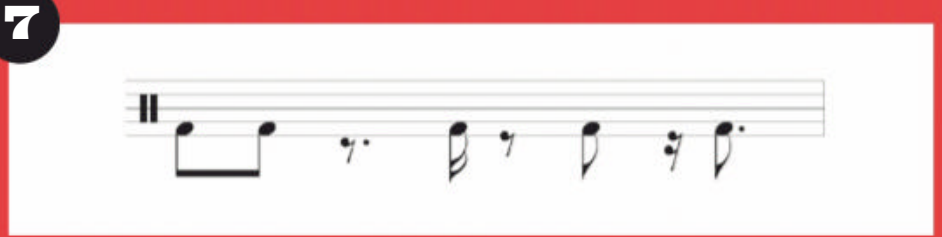
A busier, more active bass drum pattern.

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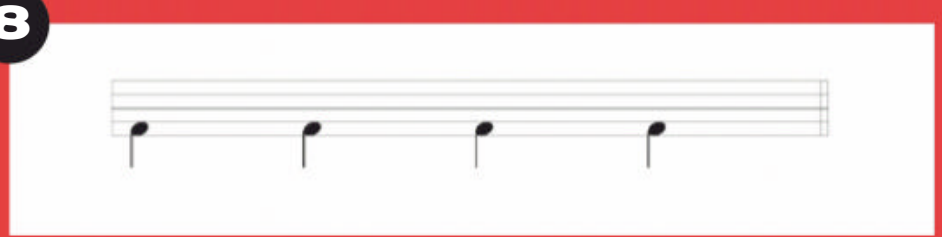

"Four-on -the-floor".

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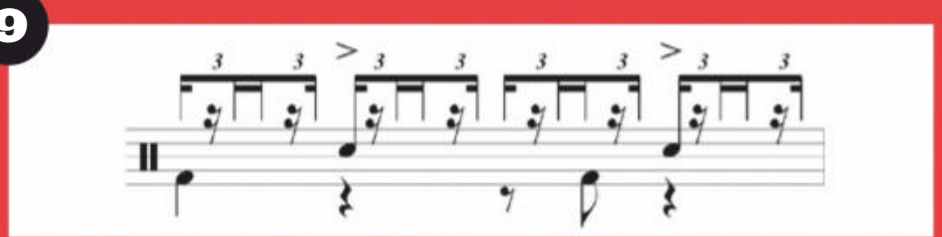
Ghost notes played as swung 16ths.

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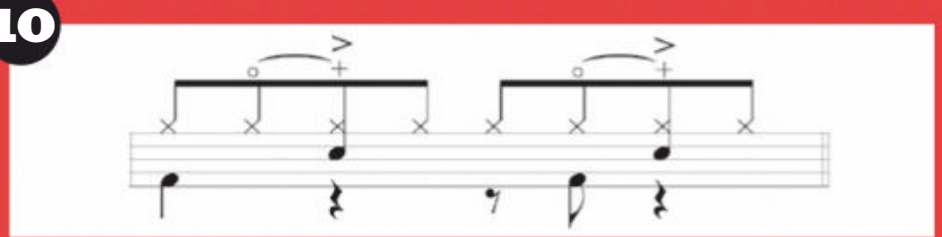

Add open hi-hat notes to all previous patterns.

Technical Difficulties

A unique approach to incorporating ghost notes, courtesy of **Pete Riley**

For Pete's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Here we're exploring an alternative approach to developing ghost notes which involves maintaining a pattern played between the snare and bass drum while the right hand plays different rhythms over the top. All of the examples in this lesson feature the same bass drum and snare pattern throughout which we could think of here as a combination of 3/3/2 with the bass drum playing the first note of each group and the snare accenting its first note in the second group of three to create a 2 and 4 backbeat.

We begin in Example 1 with the right hand and bass drum playing simultaneously, almost as though the snare is filling in the spaces. Next in Example 2, the right hand plays eighth notes. This introduces the idea of layered coordination with different rhythms overlaid over each other.

Next, you will see in Example 3 we have a broken 16th-note rhythm which when combined with the bass drum and snare creates a pattern sometimes referred to as the 'King Kong Groove'. It was named this after it appeared on a track by the band Redbone in the early '70s called 'The Prehistoric Rhythm Of The King Kong Beat'.

The remaining examples continue to pursue this layered coordination approach with the right hand playing cascara and Mozambique rhythms in Examples 5 and 6 and a 4 over 3 rhythm in Examples 7 and 8.

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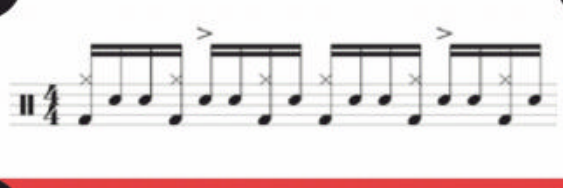

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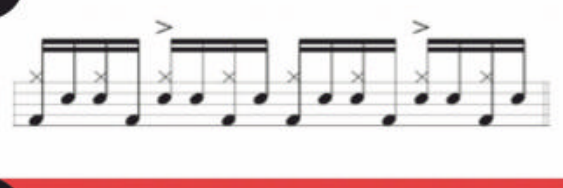
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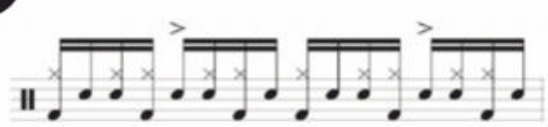
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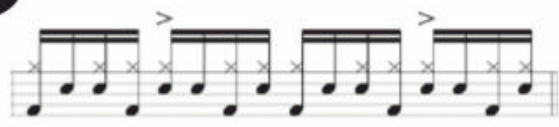
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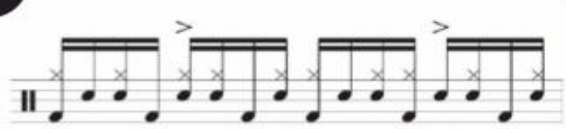
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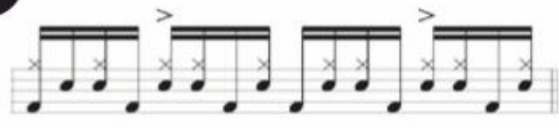
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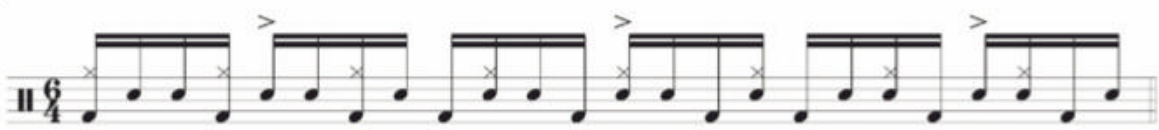
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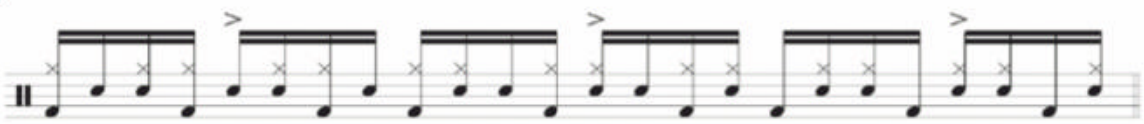

Heads up

'Layered Coordination' is a term that Tower Of Power drummer David Garibaldi coined when referring to grooves consisting of different rhythms overlaid on top of each other. As opposed to simply filling in ghost notes in the spaces of a regular groove.

Four-Piece Fills

Refresh those ruffs with creative placements says **Jason Bowld**

Image: Ryan Chang

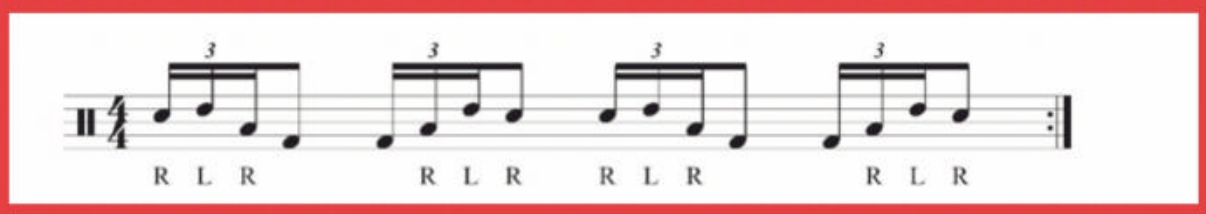
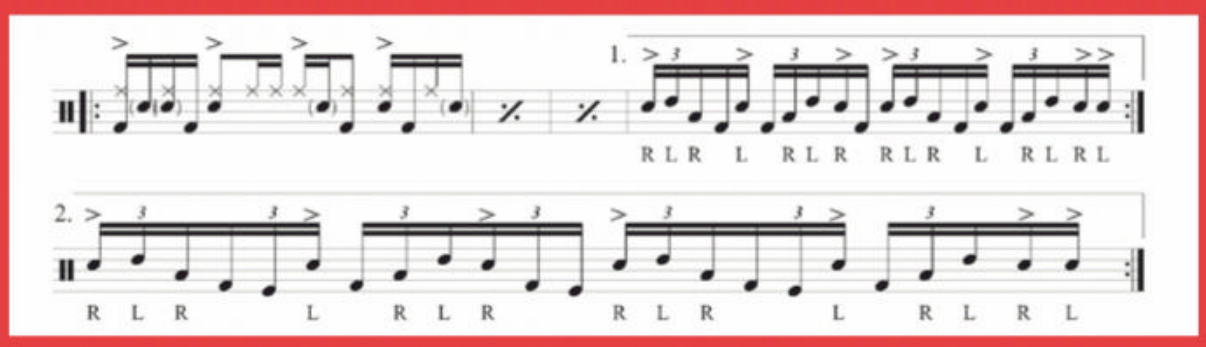
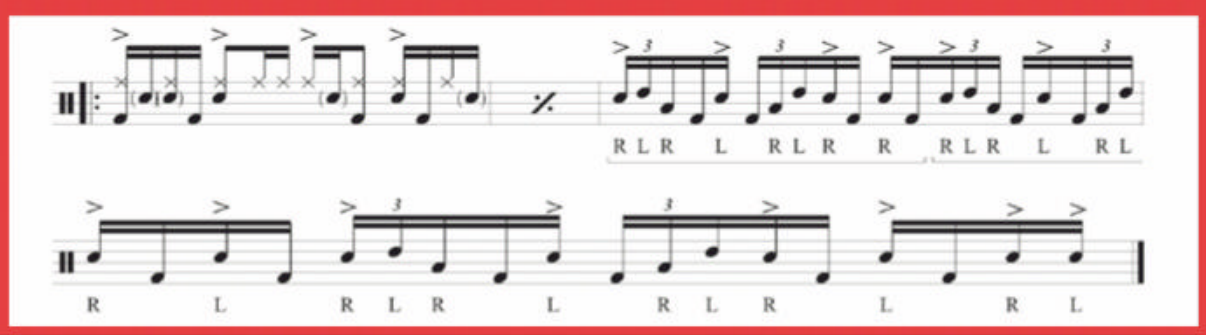
For Jason's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

This month we are going to revisit a trusty old phrase that has been well-used since the dawn of rock! Ruffs can be played in lots of different ways on the drum kit. Four-stroke ruffs are traditionally played on the snare – three quiet notes preceding an accent – but they can also be split or shared between the drums. Example 1 shows this method using a four-stroke ruff, firstly descending from the snare, down the toms to the kick drum and then ascending back up to the snare. Example 2 then places this in a musical context. Preceding three bars of groove, the first fill features an extra 16th note added on the end of each ruff to create a flowing fill. Then the second fill expands on this by further filling the gaps with triplet double kicks. Finishing with a touch of insanity, Example 3 shows a phrase of five created from the various ruff patterns you have learnt so far. This phrase is repeated three times over two bars and is wrapped up within the 4/4 meter by two 16th notes played on the snare.

Heads up

Flowing

The four-stroke ruff should be played in a snappy, flowing manner when split around the kit. This is achieved using the correct movement or technique from snare to floor and vice versa. Try using a rapid wrist rotation for this rather than a bigger unnecessary forearm movement.

1 The four-stroke ruff here is split between the snare, top tom, floor tom and kick. Then reversed, ascending the kit. Try to keep the triplet feel strong when playing it fast otherwise the ruffs may merge into one another creating a sloppy 16th sound.

2 The extra 16th note added after each four-stroke ruff effectively means you are gear changing from 16th triplets to 16th notes in a very short space of time in the first fill. If you're not aware of this, you'll probably get away with it played fast but will benefit with a cleaner execution if you practice it slower – which is more difficult! The second fill, however, is all played as 16th note triplets bar the last two notes.

3 The best way of understanding this fill is to go back to the first fill in Example 2 and simply add two extra 16ths on the end of it to create the group of five. Practising to a regular click is important here to place it in the 4/4 context – even though it will sound polyrhythmic at first.

Percussion Toolbox

Think outside the box with part two of **Pete Lockett**'s cajon masterclass

Welcome to part two of this basic primer on the fundamentals of the cajon. Last time we looked at the three main strokes – the bass tone, touch tone and sharp accented tone (or slap, see picture below). Then we looked at a few hybrid 'non-traditional' grooves to get on the move as quickly as possible. This time we will expand on that a little more. It's worth remembering here as well, that these articles are merely a starting place on the instrument and would be ideal for any drum set player who might want to add some percussion to their musical world.

For Pete's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

In Example 1, we will add in a slap/sharp stroke with the left hand on the last 16th note of the bar. Getting the right and left hand even with all the tones is vitally important, whether it's the slap, touch or bass. Listen carefully to your playing and really focus on getting the strokes with each hand to sound identical or at least as close as possible. This takes time and patience.

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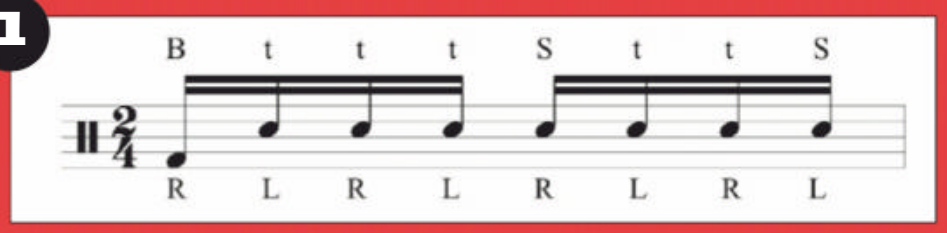

In Example 2 we add another slap stroke on the fourth 16th note.

2

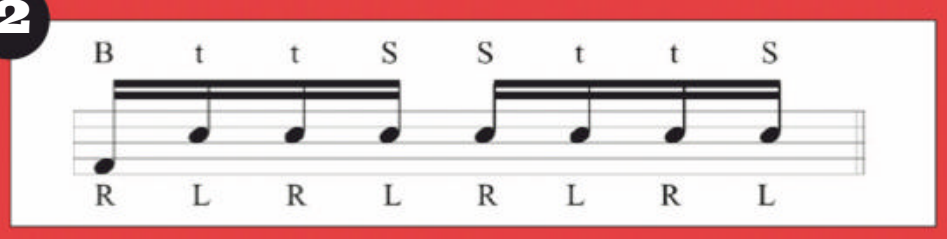
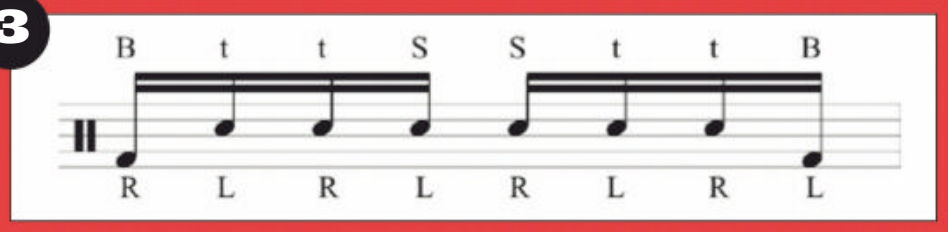
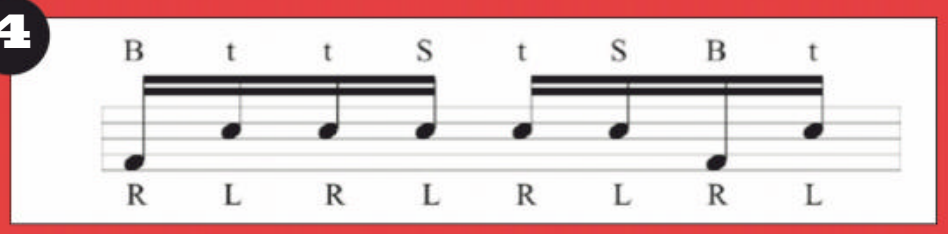
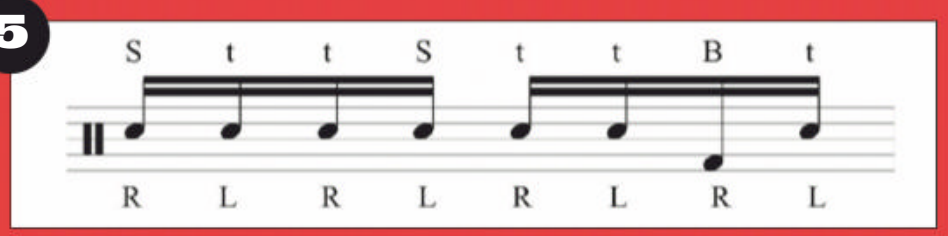



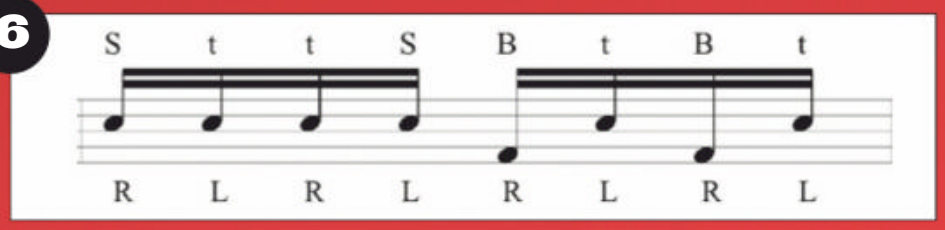
Image: Mandy Mellenthin GEWA

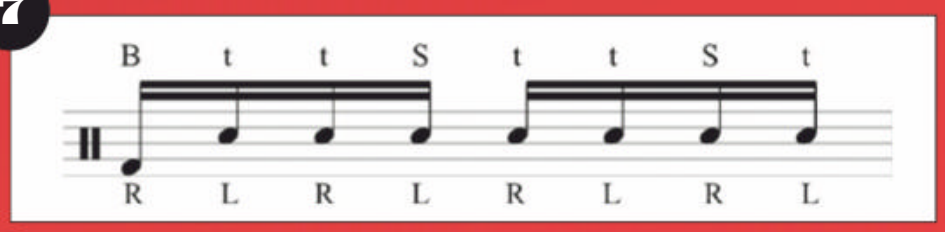
Example 3 is more of a Brazilian feel.

3

The next example is more of a fast 2/4 feel.

4

Example 5 takes inspiration from famous bongo pattern, Martillo.

5

Next, we reverse where the bass drum falls, shifting it to the second part of the bar. This is very common in percussion and works very well when working with a drummer. It gives the groove some variation by both playing the bass tones displaced from one another.

6

In Examples 7 and 8, we look at another common 2/4 groove divided 3/3/2.

7

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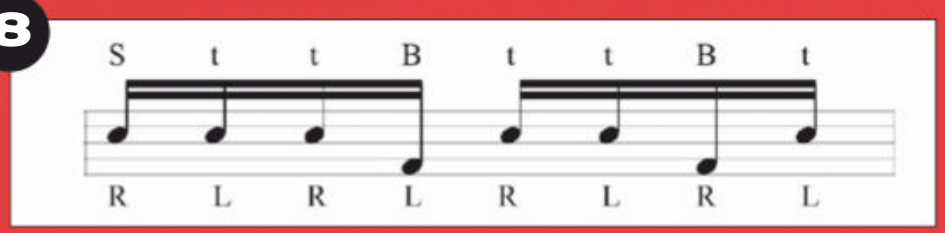
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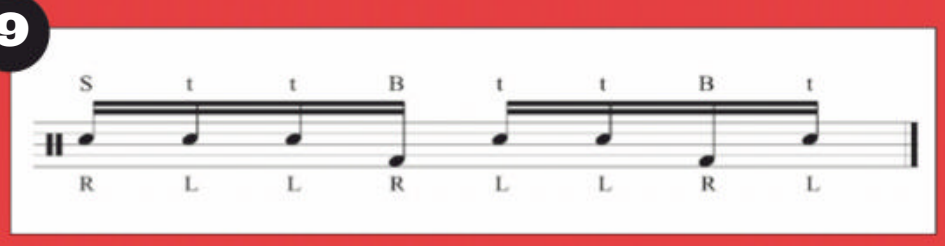
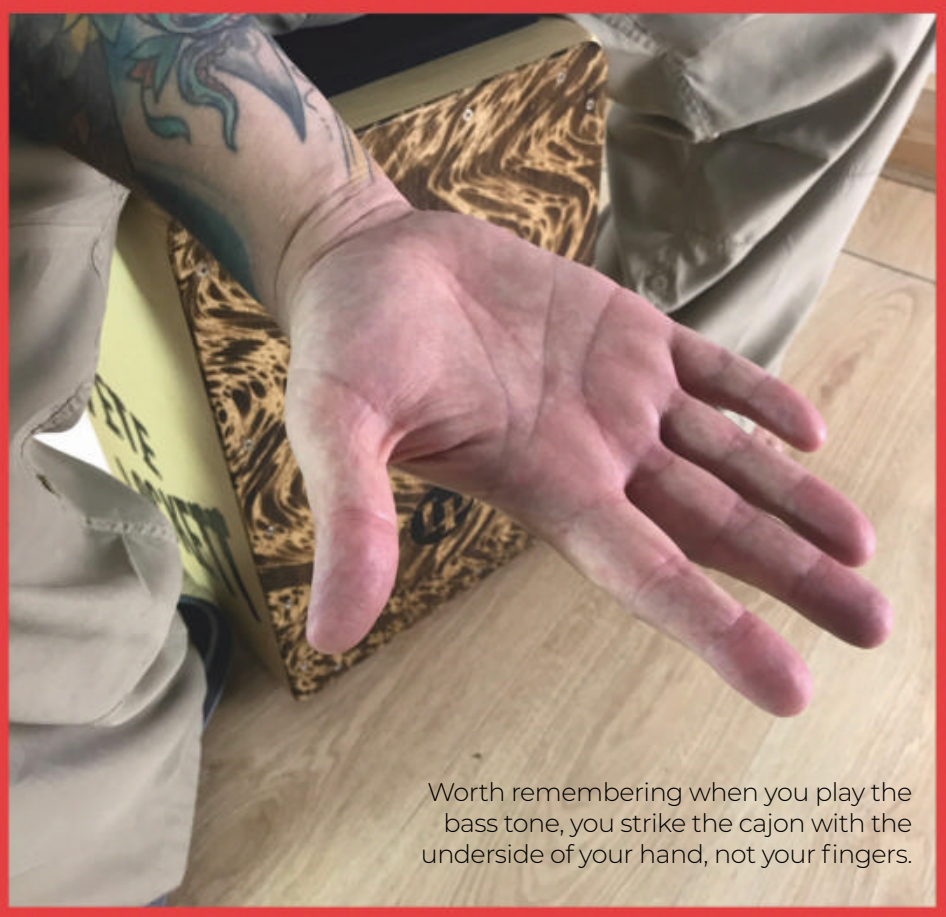

So far, everything has been played using single strokes RLRLRLRL. Of course, a lot of doubles can be used to play some of these grooves. In Example 9 we see the same groove as in Example 8 but using a RLL RLL RL hand pattern.

That's it for now with the cajon. This will certainly get you started on the instrument and maybe trigger an interest to research the amazing music and rhythms of Peru and Spain, where this instrument is most popular. Or you can start to orchestrate some of your drum set repertoire onto the instrument and start to incorporate that in some of your studio and band playing.



Worth remembering when you play the bass tone, you strike the cajon with the underside of your hand, not your fingers.

Pete Lockett with his ATV aFrame.

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How to be a More Creative Drummer

Find your 'inner Ginger' to innovate how you play. **Mike Sturgis** points the way...

The late Ginger Baker was renowned for his highly innovative approach to the drum kit, one which he expressed through the force of his indomitable spirit. His prodigious technique, combined with musical sensibilities rooted in jazz and indigenous African rhythms, provided the tool kit for his iconic explorations of the instrument. And while none of us are the same, there is much we can learn from his musical legacy to channel our 'inner Ginger' and encourage higher levels of creativity and innovation in our own playing. Let's take a look at a few ways that we might do this.

Listen up

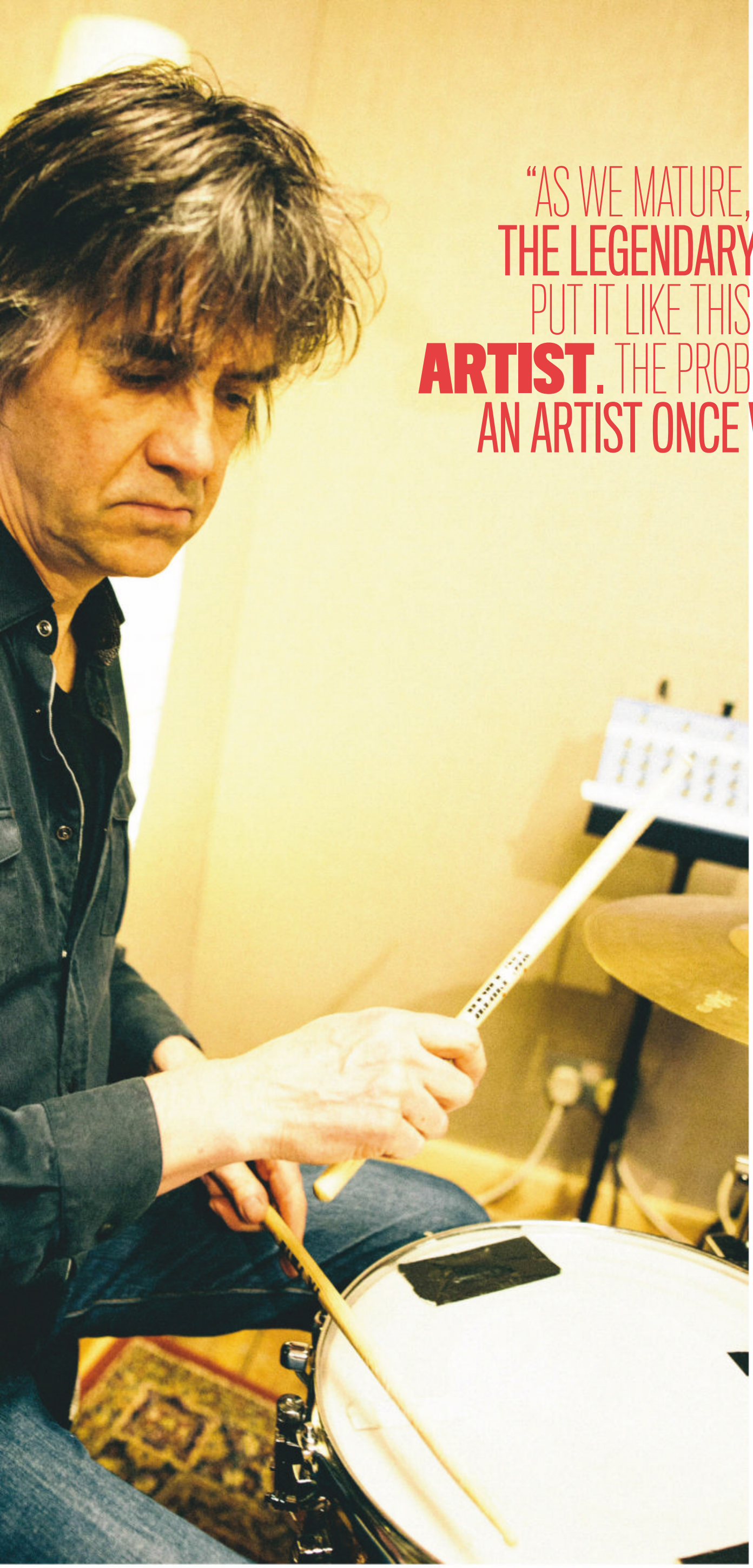
When looking for new ideas or inspiration, the benefits of listening to music cannot be overstated. But are we really listening? We have the enormous privilege these days of having access to a seemingly endless amount of music across a myriad of different platforms, but there's a danger that this can become akin to background noise. Listening takes place on different levels, and to truly absorb what we are listening to we need to set aside time and focus our attention. While there may be benefits to listening to music peripherally, more long-lasting and inspirational outcomes occur when we approach it with intentionality.

When we develop a mindset that treats listening seriously, we can then also decide with more clarity what it is we should actually listen to. Whether it is music that we closely identify with or less familiar artists and genres, making a conscious decision to fully focus our attention when listening can bring profound changes to our musical universe.

Well-equipped

How many times have we acquired a new piece of gear (e.g. a ride cymbal) and immediately felt inspired? As drummers, we have virtually limitless options regarding what instruments we use and how we set them up. And while adding another tom, percussion instrument or electronics can affect our musical choices, another equally valid way of refreshing our perspective is reduction. Regardless of the size of your current kit, the act of removing some of the things that you are so familiar with and rely so heavily on can be daunting but also very liberating. Each instrument on the drum kit has a huge range of sounds and dynamics, and by reducing them you will be forced

Image: James Cumpsty



"AS WE MATURE, WE BECOME INHIBITED... THE LEGENDARY ARTIST **PICASSO** PUT IT LIKE THIS: 'EVERY CHILD IS **AN ARTIST.** THE PROBLEM IS HOW TO REMAIN AN ARTIST ONCE **WE GROW UP.**'"

to explore more of the options on the remaining components. Additionally, you may want to experiment with your sticks (e.g. the size, shape, composition) or other objects like mallets or brushes to immediately change the sound of your musical ideas.

It's also helpful to observe what other great drummers have done with their set-ups and learn from this. Bill Bruford is an iconic drummer who has been fearlessly innovative in his choice of drum kits and additional instruments and is widely known for his unique approach and sound. In his must-read autobiography, Bill says this about his obsession with exploring different sounds in his set-up: "...this natural inquisitiveness as to what might be possible on a drum kit was leading me to fruitful avenues for research and was ultimately to be much of what I was about. Could it play tunes as well? What if you got rid of all the toms and substituted oil barrels instead? What if you put a baking tray in the bass drum and put chains all over the toms: could you prepare a drum kit in the same way as Cage and Nancarrow and Cowell had 'prepared' the piano with thumbtacks and other paraphernalia? ...In the area of timbre – the quality of sounds – it seemed that I'd found a small space from which I might contribute."

Change your environment

A change in your environment can also open you up to a whole new universe of sights, sounds and influences. For example, if you're used to working in a quiet, controlled setting it may be beneficial to experience the bustling environment found in the heart of any urban city.

This idea is eloquently explained in the book *Imagine: How Creativity Works* by Jonah Lehrer. He has some interesting things to say on the subject of creativity, and in one of the chapters he posits that the 'urban friction' found in a large city can be a catalyst for creative ideas. It may not always be pleasant, but crowded spaces force us to interact with others and not become isolationist. And it's this type of interaction that can inspire ideas and innovation that ▷

would not have happened otherwise.

One of Lehrer's main proponents for the urban life and its creative benefits is David Byrne of Talking Heads. Byrne tells how the mixture of ethnic sounds in his New York city lifestyle profoundly shaped his music – everything from funky Latin beats to jangly Nigerian bass lines to CBGBs-style punk. About his music, he says: "The city definitely made it possible. A lot of what's in the music is stuff that I first heard because it was playing down the street. Those are the accidents that have always been so important for creativity. And they just happen naturally in the right place... In a vibrant city, you can get just as much from going to the barbershop, or walking down a crowded street, as you can from going to a museum. It's about letting all that stuff in, so that the city can change you."

Letting go

Another subject covered in *Imagine...* is the paradox that, as we mature, we become inhibited; we become overly self-conscious of what we say, how we sound or of making a mistake. As we develop skills and knowledge, we also develop filters and while these are necessary and useful, our creative output can suffer as a result. The legendary artist Picasso put it like this: "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up." To contextualise this from a musical standpoint, the virtuoso cellist Yo Yo Ma says the following: "When people ask me how they should approach performance, I always tell them that the professional musician should aspire to the state of the beginner... one needs to constantly remind oneself to play with the abandon of the child who is just learning to play the cello... he is playing because making this sound, expressing this melody, makes him happy. This is still the only good reason to play."

While focus and concentration are essential elements of a successful performance, being fixated on the minutiae of your technique might make the overall quality of the music suffer. Sometimes in music or sport you hear an outstanding performance described as someone playing 'out of their mind'. In other words, there were aspects of the performance that went beyond thought; the activity itself became one that flowed intuitively, and was not limited by excessive cognition.

While attending one of his masterclasses years ago, I heard renowned bassist Shez Raja give the seemingly counter-intuitive advice to "pray for mistakes". To understand what he meant by this, you need to know that Shez is an incredible bassist who plays music at the highest level. He therefore plays 'without mistakes' for most of the time and does not intentionally play badly. What he means by "praying for mistakes" is to allow yourself the freedom to play music in such a way that you can turn unintended mistakes into a creative advantage; i.e. something that you wouldn't have thought of playing intentionally, but can actually have positive effect on the music if repurposed.

"THE **SO-CALLED RULE BOOK** SOMETIMES NEEDS TO BE **THROWN AWAY...**"

Being brave

If, in a moment of creative inspiration, you choose to allow something non-conventional to emerge in your playing, be aware: it may attract comments. Furthermore, these comments may not all be positive – in fact, none of them might be! It's at this point that you will need to self-evaluate and decide where the truth lies – i.e. what is good and right for the music and what is resonating with your soul. Hopefully these two objectives will not be mutually exclusive, or at least without some options for compromise. Not every innovative artist (e.g. David Bowie) was immediately successful with their endeavours. Truly iconic artists have often had to stand by the strength of their convictions in the face of criticism and maintain a firm self-belief in what they are doing. Remember that context is vital in making innovative musical choices; the tension between sticking with existing conventions and doing something unusual is one that all artists must learn to navigate.

Conclusion

In a world where artists face continual judgement and criticism, expressing creativity, whatever the risk, is the very thing that feeds the soul and often allows true innovation to occur. Many musical situations require adherence to clear conventions, whether it be playing in a specific manner or producing a particular type of sound. And while these expectations will always exist, there is usually at least a small amount of wiggle room with regards to how you fulfil them; this is where our creativity can shine, even if it's in an understated manner. Equally, the so-called rule book sometimes needs to be thrown away (Ginger-style) to foster the fresh winds of innovation, and it's up to each one of to decide when that moment is. As a final piece of advice, keep being a listener – in addition to stimulating creative ideas, it also will help you to be discerning as you endeavour to find the correct balance between musical maturity and the child-like creative spirit within you.

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So, You Want to Play Hybrid?

Take your hybrid setup to the next level by adding triggers says **Tom Bradley**

In the previous issue, we took our first step to creating a hybrid kit by incorporating a sound module and electronic drum pad into our existing acoustic setup. To build on this foundation, this lesson will explore acoustic drum triggers – what are they and how can we use them?

Put simply, the trigger is a device that attaches to any drum, picking up vibrations from the drum head and sending them as electronic signals to the sound module. Working in exactly the same way as a drum pad, the benefit of the acoustic trigger is that we can essentially give any one of our drums the capability of an e-drum, hearing both the programmed sound and the original acoustic sound. This is called layering.

Tech Talk

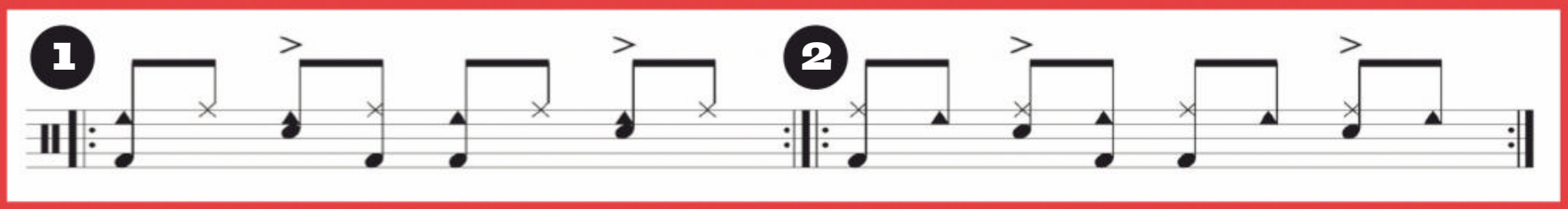
Acoustic Trigger
The acoustic drum trigger attaches to the rim of any drum and connects to the sound module via a jack cable. With the trigger connected, the drum can be used to play programmed sounds from the module.

Layering
Using a trigger on an acoustic drum allows us to 'layer' a sound from the module over the top of our existing acoustic drum sound.

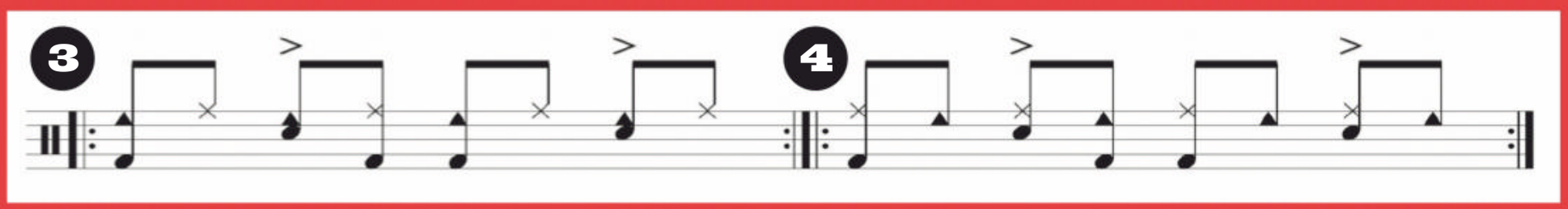
For the following exercises, we will use a trigger on the snare drum in order to layer a tambourine sound over our backbeat. We'll also keep the pad from our previous setup but this time we will use it to play a cowbell sample.

As before, check out the accompanying video lesson to see the examples performed and to take a more detailed look at the tech setup.

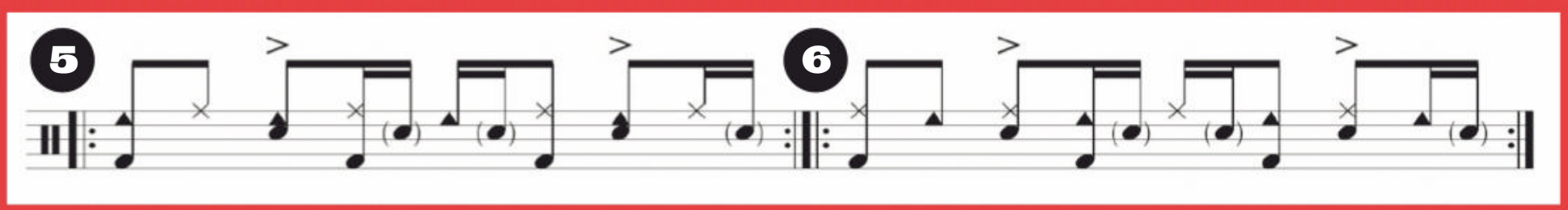
Watch Tom's lesson now at www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine



Playing eighth notes, the right hand alternates between the pad playing the cowbell and the ride cymbal. The first example starts with the cowbell which is flipped in Example 2.



Following the same format as the previous examples, we now add a bass drum on the '&' of 2.



The bass drum placement has changed once again and we're also adding a few ghost notes for good measure.

‘Highway Tune’
Greta Van Fleet

PLAY-ALONG TRACK

Where it all began for this Michigan classic rock quartet

DRUMMER: Danny Wagner

Few rock bands have experienced the rapid rise to fame of Michigan-based quartet Greta Van Fleet. Their debut EP *Black Smoke Rising*, from which ‘Highway Tune’ was the first single, was only released in 2017. Since then, brothers Josh, Jake and Sam Kiszka, along with drummer Danny Wagner, have gone on to become regarded as the new saviours of classic rock. Their music is often regarded as possessing more than a knowing nod to Led Zeppelin but for many fans, it’s this fresh interpretation of that classic sound which lies at the heart of their appeal.

‘Highway Tune’ was not only the band’s first single, it was also the first track they wrote together. It’s based around a two-bar guitar riff, which is repeated four times at the start of the piece, after which the drums enter playing a driving eighth-note feel while emphasising the movement within the riff with crashes around the kit. This eighth-note feel continues throughout the verse, though without the additional crashes, and then at the bridge, the bass drum switches to a more 16th-note based pattern while the hi-hats are played a little looser.

Transitions between these sections are marked with 16th-note based fills played between the bass drum and snare drum and Danny uses a variety of kick and snare combinations, occasionally featuring flams on the snare. It’s also worth drawing attention to the drum sound which sounds like it’s played on the larger sized drums (24" bass drum and 13" and 16" toms) that Danny seems to favour when appearing live.

As a performance, it’s a perfect example of creating a simple enough part to lock in with the music while injecting the sort of variety and energy that will carry the listener on a journey from the beginning to the end of the song.

The Track

Greta Van Fleet
‘Highway Tune’

Image: Daniel Knighton/Getty Images

“...OFTEN REGARDED AS POSSESSING **MORE THAN A KNOWING NOD TO LED ZEPPELIN** BUT FOR MANY FANS, IT’S THIS FRESH INTERPRETATION OF THAT CLASSIC SOUND **WHICH LIES AT THE HEART OF THEIR APPEAL.**”

Watch Pete’s Play-Along now at
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1 The drums punctuate the main two-bar guitar riff with crashes on quarter-notes.

As well as John Bonham, Danny Wagner has said that he's also been influenced by Carmine Appice, Mitch Mitchell and Michael Shrieve.

2 During the bridge the hi-hats loosen up and the bass drum pattern becomes more based on 16th notes.

3 The one-bar transitional fills are all played between the bass drum and snare using 16th notes.

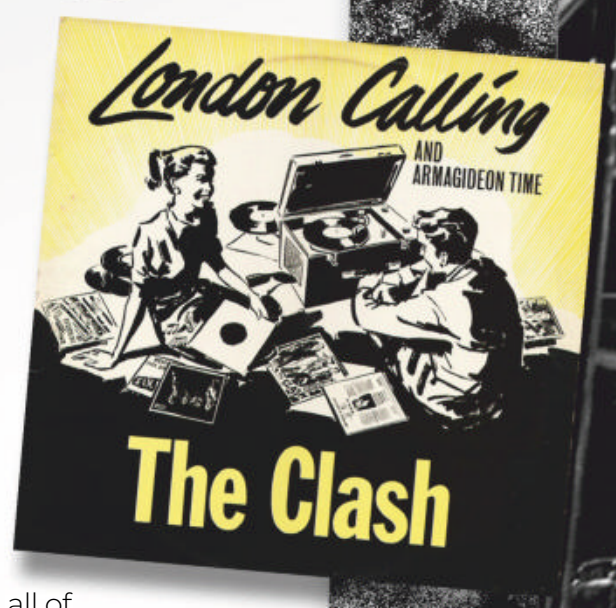
PLAY-ALONG TRACK

Classic Track

‘London Calling’
The Clash

A four-on-the-floor groove defines this seminal song

DRUMMER: Topper Headon



“London Calling’ is the title track of The Clash’s third studio album and its stark quarter-note guitar rhythm over the four-on-the-floor drum groove is immediately identifiable. It’s a sound that has influenced many other artists, with Queens Of The Stone Age’s ‘No One Knows’ and Green Day’s ‘Holiday’ both featuring similar approaches. Essentially this feel is about stating a staccato quarter-note pulse, in this case between both the drums and guitars simultaneously, with the bass’s movement the only thing stating the swung eighth-note subdivision until the arrival of the overdubbed toms. It is possible to play this tom figure within the basic feel however it sounds like they’re overdubbed on the original which would have also allowed them to be processed differently to the rest of the kit.

After the quarter-note intro feel drummer Topper Headon then switches to playing all of the eighth-notes (if hearing the piece in 12/8) on the hi-hat. He actually plays this using one hand which is quite fast so an alternative solution is to use alternating single-strokes leading with whichever hand feels most comfortable.

Halfway through the verse the drums change to a more regular shuffle feel and then after a further eight bars they begin to punctuate the upbeat of beat 2 with a crash or open hi-hat along with the snare. Throughout all of this the bass drum maintains the same quarter-note rhythm.

Halfway through the piece is the breakdown section where the drums crash the downbeat of each bar with a few different fills played in between. Here it’s interesting how the snare figures are played with a straight feel in what is a swing or triplet setting.

After the guitar solo the piece returns to the original intro feel and its overdubbed toms before heading into the final choruses where this seminal punk rock track finally ends with a one-bar eighth-note triplet fill around the drum kit.

“...ITS STARK QUARTER-NOTE GUITAR RHYTHM OVER THE FOUR-ON-THE-FLOOR DRUM GROOVE IS IMMEDIATELY IDENTIFIABLE. IT’S A SOUND THAT HAS INFLUENCED MANY OTHER ARTISTS...”

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1 Topper plays the verse feel with one hand on the hi-hats though it can be played with both using single-strokes.

Topper Headon replaced Terry Chimes in The Clash after their debut album. He played on *Give 'Em Enough Rope*, *London Calling*, *Sandinista!* and *Combat Rock*.

Image: Virginia Turbett/Getty Images

2 The bridge moves to a more conventional shuffle feel though accenting the upbeat of beat two every other bar.

3 During the stop time section the snare fills preceding the down beat crashes are played with a straight feel.

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Six of the Best

Image: Felix Ren

GEOFF DUGMORE

This Scottish session legend has played on 89 Top 20 albums and worked with everyone from Debbie Harry to Killing Joke. Here are six moments that stand out...

Heather Nova

Track: 'Winter Blue'
Album: *Siren*

"It was about 6pm and everybody locked into each other's vibe at that minute. There was complete silence after the take and we all knew something magical had just happened. I'll never forget that moment, they don't come too often. It was a time when everyone was spiritually in the same place with the song. There's not so much structure at the start of the song, it just falls into place and I think we caught on at the same time and just sailed on it. I just played from my soul."

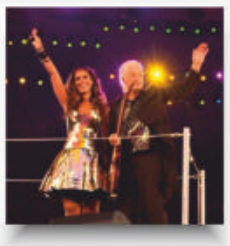
Stevie Nicks

Track: 'Rooms On Fire'
Album: *The Other Side of the Mirror*

"...My first US Number One. I'd stay up all night with Stevie just talking. She was the nicest girl and a phenomenal tambourine player! In the middle of the song, there was a breakdown and I did this fill that I didn't really feel I'd executed that well... I said about doing that bit again and Stevie said, 'No, I love that bit!' So that was it, it was done within 30 minutes."

Jimmy Page and Leona Lewis

Track: 'Whole Lotta Love'
Album: N/A



"We did this for the Beijing Olympics which was watched by three billion people... We set up the exact same way as the original and Jimmy was up on the riser right by my ride. That was inspirational. There was no point in me trying to be Bonham, I had to be my version of him... The rules were no headphones and no count-in, I had to watch Jimmy and play. It got to the drum break in the middle and I was like, 'Woah!' I almost wanted to stop because it was so incredible."

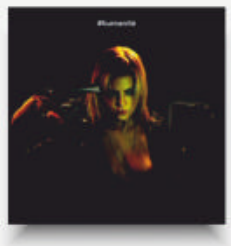
Richard Ashcroft

Track: 'They Don't Own Me'
Album: *These People*

"We recorded 31 songs in four days. I had three drum sets in the studio and I was jumping from one to another. On this song, we jammed for five or ten minutes and then hit record. We captured it really quick, it was spontaneous. I don't like to work things out too much before recording, I like to go with my instincts. That theme runs through everything I've ever done."

Damien Saez

Track: 'Les Guerres des Mondes'
Album: *#Humanité*



"This was part of a quadruple album, in this day and age! He is a true artist. He just lets you go as far left and right as you want. Creatively, this was fantastic. I had an old marching bass drum with a calf skin head and cords that you tightened the tension with. I compressed the head with my knee and when I let go it gave this great sound and the whole song was based around that sound. We spent two days just creating the drum part."

Killing Joke

Track: 'Pandemonium'
Album: *Pandemonium*

"It was recorded at about midnight, we would always start late with Killing Joke. It was intense...It has a relentlessness to it. It's about six minutes long and is pretty much the same groove all the way through, but it was maintaining that intensity that made it challenging. It was like you're in the marathon and the gun goes and you know you have a long way to go at that intensity."

musikmesse plaza

Frankfurt am Main

Information about the **drumming event of the year** at **homeofdrums.com**

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3 & 4 April 2020

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Bei Drum Workshop wissen wir, dass Schlagzeuger ihren Kits viel abverlangen. Und wir finden auch, dass Schlagzeuger nicht viel Geld für ein hochwertiges Schlagzeugset ausgeben sollten. Deshalb haben wir die Spectrum Series™ entwickelt. Warmer Sound, Hybrid-Pappel-Ahorn-Kessel mit dezenten Satin Lacquer Finishes, ausgestattet mit spielerfreundlicher Hardware. Klar könntet Ihr mehr ausgeben - müsst Ihr aber nicht. **Spectrum - von Euren Freunden der Pacific Drum Company.**

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